

Bavarian News

Vol. 5, Nr. 14 U.S. Army Garrisons Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt, and Garmisch July 15, 2009

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GO HOME !

Have you visited the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr homepage lately?

If not, it's time for a visit! The garrison public affairs office, with the help of several on-post agencies, are in the process of updating the Web page to provide Soldiers, family members, and civilians with more "news you can use!"

Useful information includes the contact information, town hall notes, community phone book, and much, much more. Visit www.grafenwoehr.army.mil today!

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View photos of community events and celebrations at www.flickr.com/photos/usaggrafenwoehr/sets

ANTICIPATION

Families welcome 527th MP Co. home after 15-month deployment



Photo by Mary Markos

Grafenwoehr families await the return of Soldiers from the 527th Military Police Company June 28. The Soldiers redeployed after 15 months in Afghanistan. For full coverage, See Page 10.

APPRECIATION

Geren highlights Soldiers, families as he prepares to step down

by JIM GARAMONE
American Forces Press Service

To Army Secretary Pete Geren, the Army is not some amorphous entity that the country calls on in time of crisis.

To him, the Army is people - Soldiers and families - serving something larger than themselves.

He knows this from visiting Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. He knows this from meeting with families as they cope with long-term and repeated deployments. And he knows this from attending funerals and burials at Arlington National Cemetery's

Section 60 for young men and women killed fighting America's wars.

As Geren prepares to step down as secretary, he can look back on solid accomplishments - all centered on Soldiers and their families. "They are truly the strength of our nation," he said during a recent interview. President Barack Obama has nominated U.S. Rep. John McHugh of New York to succeed Geren as Army secretary.

Geren, who had been serving as Army undersecretary, took over as acting secretary in March 2007 after the

See ARMY Page 25



Army Secretary Pete Geren visits troops at Forward Operating Base Ghazni, as part of a visit to Afghanistan, Sept. 20, 2008.

Photo by Sgt. Paul David Ondik

COL. SORENSON



SUICIDES

The U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr Commander calls on the community to change the stigma associated with seeking behavior-

al health help and learn the signs of depression, suicide and addiction. To find out more, See Page 2.

RETIREEES

The latest garrison re-

tiree newsletter points out the importance of DD Form 214 in the event of death, gives a poignant account of the D-Day anniversary and discusses Grafenwoehr's Retiree Appreciation Day. Find out all about it on, See Page 25.

DOWNRANGE

Check back weekly to find out what's going on with the 172nd Infantry Brigade. To learn about their mission in Iraq and how they're making a difference in the lives of Iraqi residents, See Page 18.

VIP VISIT

Second lady visits Germany

by DOUGLAS DeMAIO and MARK HEETER

USAG Bamberg & Schweinfurt Public Affairs

Dr. Jill Biden, wife of U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, visited with U.S. Soldiers and family members in Germany's Franconia region over the Independence Day weekend before traveling to Paris to deliver a keynote address at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2009 World Conference.

Biden visited Bamberg, which is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage city, July 3, and Schweinfurt the following day to show her appreciation for members of the military and their families.

"The second lady's visit here shows me how supportive this administration is to the troops," said Staff Sgt. Neil Montevirgen, a 54th Engineer Battalion Soldier stationed in Bamberg.

Biden said visiting troops and their families was a "logical step" before her speech.

"I wanted to say thank you to our troops for what they have done and to bring greetings from the administration," she said.

Biden had lunch in Bamberg with Reserve

See BIDEN Page 25

ADVENTURE

AFC brings scuba, hiking to youth

by JOY AWE
Bavarian News

Beginning this summer, Child, Youth and School Services offers a new program of activities designed to get children involved and teach them new skills.

The program, called EDGE!, gets kids out of the house and into the pool, bowling alley, art studio, or any number of other exciting places.

EDGE! stands for Experience, Develop, Grow, and Excel. The after-school program is designed for kids in grades first through 12th and is offered as an alternative to regular

See EDGE! Page 25

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



Get involved in community celebrations, be there for *your* fellow Soldiers, friends

The month of July literally started with a bang! We celebrated the 4th of July with food, entertainment, activities and of course, fireworks.

On the Grafenwoehr side, we opened Gate 1 so we could share our Independence Day celebration with our German neighbors, while it allowed us to visit the City of Grafenwoehr's Buergerfest.

The highlight of the evening was our fantastic fireworks display, which drew an estimated crowd of nearly 4,000 to our parade field. This was a fantastic climax to a great evening in our community.

Our next big community event here at the garrison is the German-American Volksfest, which begins July 31.

Come to Camp Kasserine at 11:00 a.m. that day to partake in the opening ceremony that includes the traditional keg tapping. In the meantime, let's get out into the German communities and enjoy all the fests and local events going on.

This time of year, there is normally a fest

of some type every weekend at one of the nearby German towns or cities.

Our weekly community newsletter has expanded its "Was ist Los?" section and now features more than 20 local German events ranging from concerts and fests, to motorcycle rallies and various sporting events. There really is something for everyone to do.

We have so many Soldiers and their families living in leased and private-rental housing in the various towns surrounding the installation - it's just a matter of walking to the local fest or activity in your town.

Don't miss the chance to "tap the keg" at your local event and have some great memories of your tour in Germany!

This month we welcomed the new JMTC Chief of Staff, Col. Mike Higginbottom and the new JMTC G3, Col. Curt Carson and their families. They are an important part of our community leadership and provide "community smart" advice to the incoming Senior Commander for Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels and Garmisch.

Our 4th of July event was a great initiation for Col. Higginbottom and his family, because it showed how well this military community has integrated with its German neighbors and what a beautiful place this is.

While fun activities draw our community together, so do the serious issues.

We completed Phase 2 of the Army's suicide prevention training today, which means Soldiers at every level of this installation's tenant units have participated in this interactive training which encourages discussion about decisions and shows the important role friends and co-workers play in recognizing the signs and intervening.

This training could apply to situations outside the military.

Depression, relationship and financial pressures take the same toll on people whether they are Soldiers or civilians.

The added pressures of deployment have made our Soldiers more vulnerable, but Family Members are also affected.

Our community has so many resources that can help and we must continue to make

our Soldiers, Family Members and civilians aware that leadership, chaplains, medical professionals, military police and fellow Soldiers are there to support anyone needing assistance.

Suicide prevention, Phase 3, is a continuation of the prevention, but the focus is also about supporting a change in culture by removing the stigma for seeking help.

Please, continue to discuss suicide prevention, intervene if necessary and help your fellow Soldier, friend, Family Member or anyone needing counseling and support find it. That's what makes us Army Strong.

Please, continue to discuss suicide prevention, intervene if necessary and help your fellow Soldier, friend, Family Member or anyone needing counseling and support find it.

*Col. Chris Sorenson
Commander, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

CSM CORNER



Stay safe, follow garrison policy with regards to swimming pools and trampolines

With summer in full swing and the warm weather drawing many of us outdoors, I have seen that some Soldiers and family members are not adhering to the garrison policies regarding trampolines and swimming pools.

The Consumer Product Safety commission estimated that in 2001 there were 91,870 hospital emergency-room-treated injuries associated with trampolines.

Almost 93 percent were under 15 years of age and 11 percent were under five years of age. The most common injuries included broken bones, dislocations, concussions, sprains/strains and neck/spiral cord injuries.

While trampolines are permitted in government-owned and leased housing areas, I implore extreme caution be taken, with strict compliance to the following restrictions and guidelines:

- Trampolines must be erected within a lockable fence or enclosure, so that unrestricted, unprompted use cannot occur. If

the owners do not have such an area available to them, then the trampoline must be dismantled when not in use.

- Safety pads must be installed to completely cover the springs, hooks, and frame. A safety net or trampoline enclosure must be installed around the trampoline to help prevent falls.

- Children under the age of 12 must be supervised at all time while on the trampoline and must have parental permission prior to using the trampoline. Due to the overwhelming number of injuries to younger children, we strongly recommend parents do not allow children less than six years of age to use a trampoline.

- Only one person is authorized on a trampoline at a time.

- No ladder may be used to assist children onto the trampoline as this encourages unsupervised access by small children.

Building and Area Coordinators are responsible for monitoring and

maintaining compliance with the above guidelines.

One injury related to the improper use of trampolines, is one too many!

Swimming pools, to include wading pools, are another instance in which policy prevents injuries.

While they too can be used in government-owned and leased housing areas, residents must adhere to the garrison policy.

The policy has further guidance for swimming pools, spas and hot tubs, but I would like to stress the following regulations specific to wading pools, or the smaller plastic pools often seen in the housing areas.

Wading pools must not exceed 14 inches in height and 60 inches in diameter.

The resident (sponsor or spouse) adult must provide continuous supervision when there is water in the pool and the pool must be drained and stored after each use. The pool cannot have a cover attached.

To ensure the safety of our children, garrison policies must be followed!

While safety is Col. Sorenson's

and my number one concern, we are also concerned and alarmed at the improper manner in which residents are disposing of trash in the housing areas and on post.

In order to protect the environment and our natural resources, we all must follow the SORT and recycling policies and laws of our host nation.

If you are unsure of your community-specific guidelines, call DSN 475-6664, CIV 09641-83-7144 in Grafenwoehr, or DSN 476-2600, CIV 09662-83-2600 in Vilseck.

Regardless of your community, the bottom line is the same for all of us - residents are required to separate their garbage and place it in containers appropriate for the material.

Each community has recycling containers for glass, paper, metal, plastics and refuse. Garbage and trash cannot be left in stairwells, common areas, or parks and residents living off-post are not allowed to dispose of their trash or garbage on the installation unless at designated collections points.

Collection points have all recycling containers and allow for

bulky items such as furniture, carpets and bicycles.

The collection point in Grafenwoehr is located on the tank trail between the Shoppette gate (gate 9) and the Tanzfleck gate (gate 4). The Vilseck collection point is by the railhead/CIF. Recycling is available 24 hours a day at the Grafenwoehr collection point so there is no excuse for not following policy.

I have, and will continue to visit the housing areas to see if these and all policies are being followed.

This column will be a place for me to provide feedback from those visits.

I encourage you to provide us feedback as well. Send comments and concerns regarding all services on post through the Interactive Customers Evaluation, or ICE link, located at the bottom of the 'links' at the garrison Web site, www.grafenwoehr.army.mil/default.asp.

*Command Sgt. Maj.
William Berrios
CSM, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

Do YOU have a question you'd like to ask the garrison leadership? Send questions to mary.markos@eur.army.mil with "Question for command" in the subject line. All questions will receive a response, select questions will be published in upcoming issues of the Bavarian News.

Bavarian News

Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt, and Garmisch

Producer: **MILCOM Advertising Agency**
Roswitha Lehner

Zeilaeckerstr. 35 · 92637 Weiden · Telefax 0961-67050-32

Internet: **www.milcom.de**

Bavarian News is an unofficial biweekly publication authorized by AR 360-1. Editorial views are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. The paper is an offset publication prepared and edited by the U.S. Army Garrison-Grafenwoehr Public Affairs Office. Bavarian News is printed by Werbeagentur und Verlag Roswitha Lehner and distributed every other Wednesday. Circulation is 9,800 copies. Submissions are welcome. Send letters to the editor and commentaries to PAO, Unit 28130, Attn: Bavarian News, APO AE 09114, or e-mail them to usagnews@graf.eur.army.mil. Telephone the Bavarian News at 475-7113 or fax to 475-7935 with story ideas and events.

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Grafenwoehr children spend time with Stryker Soldiers, discover technology

Story and photos by
Spc. JERRY WILSON
2SCR Public Affairs

The children of the Grafenwoehr Child Development Center received a special treat June 26. Troopers from 3rd Squadron of the 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment took time out of their busy schedule to stop by and

Staff Sgt. Anthony Torrescano helps a young student from the Child Development Center try on a Kevlar helmet with a set of nightvision goggles attached.



share with the kids what it is like to be a Soldier. The Soldiers brought along a variety of tools used by Infantryman such as night vision goggles as well as a Stryker vehicle for the kids to get a closer look and climb inside. “We were asked by the CDC to come out and show the kids our equipment so they can get a better

idea of what it is we do as a career infantryman,” said Staff Sgt. Anthony Torrescano. “The overall intent is to give the kids a better understanding so when they see it on TV it isn’t so scary,” Torrescano said. Along with the Stryker, troopers brought along several pairs of night vision goggles and binoculars for the children to try on and operate. The students, who ranged in ages from one to five years old, donned the Soldiers’ helmets and talked to each other via the Stryker communication system. Two Dragoon troopers also took the time to sit down with the children and read a story. According to Staff Sgt. Steven Cruz, this was a great learning experience for the Soldiers as well as their young audience. “We like to have our young Soldiers do these kinds of events,” Cruz said. “It really is a character builder.” Torrescano, himself a father of two girls, claims this kind of interaction is crucial to healthy overall childhood development. “This gives them a better



Staff Sgt. Steven Cruz helps one of the younger children from the Child Development Center in Grafenwoehr discover what the inside of a Stryker is like.

understanding of what Daddy does for a living,” Torrescano said. “They hear something on television and it isn’t quite so scary.” “Events like this helps kids develop a better understanding of why (their daddy has to go away for six to 12 months,” he said. “That way, they have some idea of what he is doing.” Following the event, each child received a 2SCR patch, chem-light and several Stryker pictures to color.

Drivers experience effects of alcohol on the road

Story and photo by
JOY AWE
Bavarian News

It’s not every day someone straps himself into a brand-new Dodge Charger to try his hand at some drunken driving while a crowd stands by to watch.

That, however, is exactly what almost one hundred people did July 4-5 at the Exchange New Car Sales-sponsored drunken driving simulation at the Grafenwoehr Army and Air Force Exchange Services Post Exchange. Participants donned a virtual reality headset while they took a seat in the simulation-car. The headset gave them a view of a virtual road scene that participants were first asked to drive while fully “sober” and then allowed to input a number of drinks into a computer program which altered the car’s reaction time and handling to simulate the effects of alcohol.

The computer program calculated each driver’s blood alcohol content based on how many drinks the person had consumed, how much time it took to drink them, the person’s age, weight and body-build.

The simulator demonstrated the effects alcohol can have on the body, including loss of peripheral vision, slowed reaction time, and decreased awareness of surroundings.

The more drinks a person had “consumed,” the harder it became to turn the steering wheel and manipulate the controls of the car.

While each participant drove, the audience was able to see what the driver was seeing in the headset on two large television screens.

Those who volunteered to drive the simulator were surprised to discover the effects a single



Staff Sgt. Jonathan Valverde wears a simulation headset to experience the effects of alcohol while driving the drunken driving simulator in Grafenwoehr. He said he noticed that the simulated effects of alcohol made him focus so much on trying to get the vehicle to respond to him, that he couldn’t focus on the road.

beer can have upon one’s driving skills. “It was just really disorienting,” said Staff Sgt. Jonathan Valverde, 5th Maintenance Company. “I realized that when you’re driving and you’ve got a little bit of impairment, the steering is just a little bit off.” “I felt like I had to pull the steering wheel a

lot to get anywhere,” continued Valverde. “I felt like I had to be more focused on how often I was turning the wheel and I was so focused on that one particular thing that it was hard to focus on the rest of the stuff, like the road.” Not everyone who drove the simulator was a licensed driver yet.

Laura Meckley, Kate Mason and Lisa Ross, Cadette Girl Scouts from Troop 117, came to earn their Road Safety patch.

The 13-year-olds, accompanied by troop leader Sana Mason, each took a turn in the simulator.

“It was really cool, but it’s really hard to steer,” said Meckley, daughter of Training Support Activity Europe civilian employee Doug Meckley.

“You keep trying to steer and it won’t go where you want it to, and if you have too many beers you start getting tunnel vision, and then you really have trouble driving.

“I think a lot of people think that if you drunk drive you can still pretty much drive really well, but you really can’t,” she said.

While living in Germany, it is critical to know that there is a lower tolerance for drunken driving than the United States.

In German law, a driver who is involved in an accident with a BAC above 0.03% is automatically held liable for the accident.

A driver with a BAC between 0.05% and 0.08% will lose his or her license for 30 days and receive a fine of 500 Euro.

Drunken driving laws in Germany do not apply to only motorists. Riding a bicycle with a BAC above 0.16% can also result in loss of one’s driver’s license.

Nearby the simulator presentation, the Garrison Safety Office also demonstrated proper use of different types of child safety seats.

Safety seats are required for babies and children under 12 years old and 4’11” tall.

The drunken driving simulator also appeared at U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels July 8-9 and at the Vilseck Rose Barracks July 10-11.

Assessment to grade Army Family Covenant success

IMCOM-E Press Release

From mid-July through September, the United States Army in Europe and Installation Management Command Europe Region will join forces to evaluate just how well the Army Family Covenant is meeting the needs and expectations of Soldiers and families in Europe.

The Army Family Covenant Assessment in Europe is the first initiative of its size and scope in the Army.

It is a holistic approach designed to study and evaluate the effectiveness of the full range of AFC programs and services. The goal is to maximize the positive impacts for Army Families in Europe.

The assessment begins in July with

pre-defined focus groups drawn from the seven garrisons across Europe that have been most impacted by recurring, extended deployments: United States Army Garrison Weisbaden, Stuttgart, Ansbach, Schweinfurt, Bamberg, Grafenwoehr, and Vicenza.

On-site facility visits and interviews will be conducted spanning a wide range of uniformed and civilian individuals represented in Family Readiness Groups, Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers programs and commanders and command sergeants major.

The focus group assessment will be followed up in August with an online survey that anyone in Europe will be encouraged to complete.

The survey will focus on gauging community satisfaction with all aspects

of Covenant-related programs and services, from health care, housing and youth services, to single Soldier programs and other Morale, Welfare and Recreation and quality of life programs.

Stay tuned for more information at your garrison that will direct you where and how to access the survey to ensure your voice is heard to improve future programs and service.

Army Family Covenant funds have brought \$7.5 million and more than 300 new spaces to U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr Child Development and School Age Services Centers.

Photo by Kim Gillespie



BMEDDAC welcomes new commander to U.S. Army Health Clinic Grafenwoehr



Lt. Col. Kendra P. Whyatt crosses in front of her troops June 30 after assuming command of the U.S. Army Health Clinic Grafenwoehr.

by JENNIFER WALSH
BMEDDAC PAO

Lt. Col. Kendra P. Whyatt assumed command of the U.S. Army Health Clinic, Grafenwoehr June 30.

Whyatt comes to Grafenwoehr from the Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center at Fort Gordon, Ga., where she served as a staff officer and head nurse of the medical center.

Her other military assignments include assistant chief nurse with the 86th Combat Support Hospital – Task Force Mosul; executive officer and head nurse of Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Landstuhl, Germany; and assistant head nurse of cardio-thoracic/stepdown at Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Whyatt, accompanied by her spouse and three children, takes command of USAHC Grafenwoehr as it goes through a period of expansion.

The clinic, whose beneficiary population more than doubled in the past two years, not only recently added a new behavioral health clinic, but also a pediatrician to its medical staff.

“My goal for the next two years is to ensure we continue to provide the highest quality of patient care while meeting the ever-changing

needs of our military service members, their families, and Department of Defence beneficiaries through the implementation of programs and process improvement,” Whyatt said.

USAHC Grafenwoehr is part of U.S. Army Medical Activity, Bavaria.

BMEDDAC, headquartered at Rose Barracks in Vilseck, provides the command and control for an ambulatory network of seven primary care health clinics throughout Bavaria that support over 40,000 Soldiers and family members in the Bamberg, Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Illesheim, Katterbach, Schweinfurt, and Vilseck communities.

The clinics are out-patient primary care or ambulatory clinics and are capable of providing urgent care, routine care, and wellness examinations.

Ambulatory care is defined as medical services that are provided as out-patient care. Services include diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation.

The health clinics do provide some special resources such as physical therapy, optometry, audiology and behavioral health.

Whyatt follows Lt. Col. Telita Crosland in command, who is on her way to the U.S. Army Industrial College of Armed Forces at Fort McNair.

Former Dragoon visits 2SCR, calls for excellence

by Spc. JERRY WILSON
2SCR Public Affairs

For Command Sgt. Maj. John Wayne Troxell a recent visit to the 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment in Vilseck was like coming home.

Troxell, who is currently the CSM of the U.S. Army Armor Center in Fort Knox Kentucky, served as the 2SCR Regimental Command Sergeant Major from 2004 to 2006.

Troxell spent time with 2SCR Soldiers discussing issues facing troopers in the 19- Armor series Military Occupational Specialty as well as what it means to be a member of the noncommissioned officer corps.

Transformation was the topic of discussion as Troxell outlined some of the changes being made in today’s Armor units.

He talked about the shift from armor heavy teams to a lighter Brigade Combat team.

“In the old days we were a tank heavy force, because we were set up to fight the Russians,” he said. “We were trained to fight them on open

What makes us strong is what Al Qaeda fears the most: our NCO Corps. Our NCOs today are doing missions that 20 years ago, captains and lieutenant colonels were doing ... I need your help out there ... I urge you all to continue to drive on and do what it takes to acheive the band of excellence. Let there be no doubt that the band of excellence is from 90 to 100 percent.

Command Sgt. Maj. John Wayne Troxell
U.S. Army Armor Center, Command Sergeant Major

plains where you saw them from miles away.”

Troxell then went on to explain the shift from the heavy tank units to a lighter more mobile force.

“Now the enemy is in the city, blended in with the population,” he continued. “In order to get at them we have to secure the population, identify the enemy and chop their heads off.”

“What better kind of unit to do that than a Stryker unit,” he said.

According to the Sergeant Major – these things coupled with the fact

that it’s easier to deploy a lighter unit into combat were some of the reasons that the Army is shifting from a 64 percent Armor force to 57 percent reconnaissance.

Troxell then went on to discuss the ever-changing role of the noncommissioned officer in today’s Army and the Global War on Terror.

“What makes us strong is what Al Qaeda fears the most,” he said, “our NCO Corps.”

“Our NCOs today are doing missions that 20 years ago captains and lieutenant colonels were doing,”

he said.

“I would go out to my battle space in Iraq and see a young staff sergeant doing the job of a company commander just 10 years ago,” he said.

It is for this reason that Troxell stressed the need for Noncommissioned Officers to maintain high standards of readiness and ensure their Soldiers follow their example.

“I need your help out there,” he said. “You have to be able to pass the Army Physical Fitness Test and meet the height, weight and body fat

standards.”

He stressed the need to make sure Soldiers have all the required equipment they need before they deploy or go to school.

“Here’s what it takes leaders,” Troxell said, “It takes the moral courage to say to Spc. Troxell, ‘Get out in the quad and bring all your gear with you. We are going to lay your stuff out and make sure you got everything.’”

“That is how you certify they are prepared to accomplish their mission.”


Troxell encouraged all Soldiers to continuously hone their leadership skills.

“I urge you all to continue to drive on and do what it takes to achieve the band of excellence,” he said.

“Let there be no doubt that the band of excellence is from 90 to 100 percent. It isn’t 71 percent,” he continued, “71 percent is barely a passing grade.”


The command sergeant major closed his visit by awarding a coin to one outstanding Soldier and NCO from each squadron.

JMTC
NCO OF THE YEAR



Year of the NCO Spotlight

Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Beckman
Age: 31
Current Unit: 7th Army NCO Academy (WLC)
Current Position: Senior small group leader
Component: Army
Current Location: Grafenwoehr, Germany
Hometown: Venango, Neb.
Years of Service: 12



He is calm and unassuming. He speaks with authority when it comes to training and mentoring Soldiers. Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Beckman, senior small group leader of Company C, 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy in Grafenwoehr, Germany, loves what he does for a living. He is a Soldier who loves soldiering.

“You can always take something from everyone, either how to do something well, or how not to do it,” he said. “Learn from mission, and every senior, peer and subordinate.”

Beckman leads a platoon of four staff sergeants and 48 sergeants in four squads. He leads, coaches, and counsels them in NCO leadership, during the rigorous 390-hour Warrior Leader Course, a basic leadership course that provides Soldiers with an opportunity to acquire the skills, knowledge, and experience needed to lead a team size element.

Training others to be the best puts pressure on him to be the best, he said, to prove he could hold his own against other NCOs, he accepted a challenge to compete in the 2009 Joint Multinational Training Command’s NCO of the Year competition.


“I had to ensure my Soldiers were as good as I, or better than I am,” he said.

Beckman won the title, and will move on to compete in the U.S. Army Europe competition, Aug. 9-13.

“It was fun being a Soldier again, he said. “Anything you think a Soldier needs to be proficient at, we were tested on, start to finish.”

Deployed in 1999 to Kosovo; 2002 to Kuwait; and during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, Beckman is no stranger to what it takes to serve in the Army during war.

“Deployments give you the opportunity to apply what you have learned, perfect your battle drills, and take lessons-learned to prepare for the next time,” said Beckman. “There is no better way to get better than by actually doing your job.”



www.army.mil/yearofthenco

Independence Day celebration brings Americana, competition to the Alps

by JOHN REESE
USAG Garmisch PAO

Bubbling pots of competition chili and smoke wafting from a battery of barbecues serving up brats and burgers brought the Spirit of '76 to Artillery Kaserne July 3.

The Garmisch County Fair, hosted for the third year in a row by the U.S. Army Garrison Garmisch, was even "bigger and better than last year's as promised for the hundreds of Americans celebrating Independence Day," said Steve Gauthier, director Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

"We didn't rest on our laurels of the past two years," said Gauthier, a key player in making the event a success. "We kept what worked, improved what needed improving, and insured that everyone had a great time. The weather didn't cooperate this year, but that didn't stop us, and by early afternoon the sun came out and so did the people."

Patriotic decorations waved proudly and red-and-white checkered table clothes were clamped on to the picnic tables to keep them from waving, and bales of hay provided both ambiance and a comfortable place to sit; an added benefit later was to break up and spread a hay bale over a muddy high traffic spot.

"In all of my time in Europe, no matter where I worked, it always rains on the Fourth of July celebration. Regardless of weather, we put on an old-fashioned American county fair," said Gauthier. "We added volleyball this year."

Local burgermeisters, Bundeswehr officers and non-commissioned officers and other German leaders accepted Manager Karin H. Santos' invitation to share America's day and joined her for the festivities.

The day's activities began dry enough with a morning 5k fun run and the start of the co-ed "one pitch speed softball" tournament that was to last all day but was called when a particularly nasty weather front passed through.

A flash of lightning directly overhead followed by the crack of the bolt striking nearby was immediately followed by four mysterious "booms" that were never explained, but possibly

were echoes in the narrow Alpine valley. The brief electrical storm was enough to cancel the band, the only other item cancelled besides softball.

Armed Forces Network Bavaria "The Eagle" morning personalities Staff Sgt. Frank Brown and Sgt. Kenia Kraus worked the crowds and competitions with wireless microphones, broadcasting live throughout Europe. This was AFN's second consecutive year covering the fair for their Europe-wide radio audience.

Food competitions

The rules for the food competitions were strict: no store-bought mixes or frostings and no canned fruit fillings for the baked pies, cakes and other desserts, while the chili had to be prepared on site. Pies and baked goods were entered and displayed in a pavilion for later tasting while chili chefs got to work simmering their southwestern specialties next to the AFN setup. With Kraus working the AFN boards, Brown sampled the desserts

"I'm the celebrity dessert judge," announced Garmisch Kindergarten teacher Jamie Wert to all of Europe via AFN to explain why she wore a tiara. "And the best dessert is Dave Hansen's

Chocolate-Pecania-Bananna-Manna!"

"I liked the chocopecan-banana cake and I was actually surprised. I've never had anything like that and I'm not partial to

that kind of dessert - we're into peach cobbblers and straight-up desserts where I come from in the South," said Brown. "I actually did that cartoon character thing of floating up when I tasted that, it was so good!"

Immediately following the judging the crowd descended upon the desserts like locusts, leaving nothing but crumbs and empty dishes.

The chili rules limited the traditional meat chili to the same as those used by International Chili Society, with an inspection of the raw ingredients before cooking began. Cooks could use as many different chilies as their recipe called for, but not simple pre-packaged chili mix powders, and those who added beans or other fillers had to compete as "maverick" chilies.

Each of the chili cooks took samples to the AFN for on-air reviews of their

works in progress.

"What's your secret ingredient?" asked Kraus.

"Peanut butter," admitted Wisconsin farm girl Kristine Ratza after a moment's hesitation. "It also has a little beer, tequila and brown sugar."

Ratza took the trophy for her maverick chili while Texan Brandy Humphrey won the traditional chili category for the second year running.

Spectator Sports

The smallest children bounced around inflated "castles" while older children leapt ski-high on a contraption that combined bungee cords and trampolines. Other crafts and activities abounded, including the newest addition: archery.

"Outdoor Recreation began teaching archery earlier this year, so we added an archery range to our games," said Gauthier.

Adults and teens participated in games like the frozen t-shirt contest and the ever popular Beer Crate Climb.

"What's a frozen t-shirt contest?" asked Kraus on the air.

"You'll see," promised Gauthier.

Men and women were issued a rolled-up frozen t-shirt, and whoever put it on first won. A large limestone rock, trees, and anything solid in the fairgrounds was enthusiastically whacked to break the ice.

The last big event of the day was a harrowing contest of balance and daring do as challengers attempted to build a stack of beer crates beneath them.

Two of the stacks grew to more than three stories high, swaying ever more perilously as physics and gravity battled individual dexterity and bravado. The participants are secured by a safety line to a cherry-picker hydraulic lift, similar to climbing artificial rock walls in that the adrenalin flows freely when the tower finally tumbles, giving the crate stacker a split second of freefall.

With a large crowd assembled around the hay-bale perimeter cheering each additional crate, only a few of the contestants out of the crowd managed to stack more than 20 crates, and two teenaged daredevils stacked 30-plus crates to ring the cow bell affixed to the bottom of the lift.

The result was a tie for the 2009 BCC winner with 32 crates (about 31 feet high!).

As the day wound down, the creative cooks stopped frying chicken and instead battered and deep-fried cookies, cupcakes and other snack cakes, causing an instant sensation and new Garmisch County Fair tradition.

Joe Liston, an employee at Mueller Fitness Center, took a bite of a fried, cream-filled orange cupcake and his knees slightly buckled as he rolled his eyes to heaven.

"This is soooo good," he sighed.



Photo by Drew Benson

Above: Kristine Ratza (left) and Brandy Humphrey pose with their "trophies" after winning in the Chili Cook-Off competition.



Photo by Larry Reilly

Above: Alexandra Hill stacks 32 beer crates to win the female category in the Beer Crate Climb competition July 3.



Frozen t-shirt contestant Staff Sgt. John Mills, 2SCR, struggles to get the his t-shirt thawed and put on at the Garmisch Independence Day celebration, July 3. Contestants were given a t-shirt that had been rolled and frozen and were challenged to put the shirt on first. Trees, rocks and other hard surfaces were utilized by contestants to break the ice that encased each shirt.

Photos by Drew Benson

Garrison capital improvements mean increased reliability in services, savings

by **KRISTIN BRADLEY**

Bavarian News

Installation Management Command-Europe is providing Europe's garrisons with more than \$150 million in Sustainment, Restoration and Management funds during fiscal year 2009 which will mean environmental, cost and logistical improvements for U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels.

The funds translate into improvements in the quality of life infrastructure for Hohenfels Soldiers, family members and employees.

"In Soldier terms this means that we in the installation management business will be eliminating some of the backlog of nagging maintenance deficiencies in our barracks and around our communities while simultaneously making some wise capital investments to our infrastructure thus improving sustainability and quality of life," Diane Devens, director of IMCOM-Europe, said in a press release.

Though the expenditures are the equivalent of investing in car repair when you would rather spend that money on a vacation - more critical but not as exciting - according to Josef Koller, USAG Hohenfels Department of Public Works Utilities Branch chief, they are crucial to the garrison's day-to-day operations.

The largest of the three Hohenfels projects is \$1.37 million to replace

the Utilities Energy Monitoring and Control System.

Not visually exciting - the UEMCS amounts to only a few large computers housed behind a key-pad-protected door in DPW - in reality the system controls almost every technical aspect of life on post and saves the garrison nearly \$1.5 million annually in energy and manpower.

According to Koller, there are 33,000 data control devices in 970 facilities throughout post that transmit data like temperature, light, humidity, water treatment and much more back to the main computer.

Most systems are controlled automatically to save energy and money.

For example, the UEMCS controls street lamps and automatically turns the heat off in offices at 8 p.m. and back on at 7 a.m.

They can tell if an oil tank is about to overflow, averting an environmental disaster.

The system even runs a 24-hour alert program, sending a message to the on-call DPW staff if, for example, the heat goes out in the barracks.

"We'll know there is a problem before you even notice something is wrong," said Koller.

"All utilities systems on post are 100 percent UEMCS dependent. A break endangers operations of garrison facilities and ultimately the mission,"

Koller said.

Koller explained it is for that reason the garrison cannot afford for the system to go down.

First built in 1983, he said it is sorely outdated, comparing it to an old personal computer you can no longer get software or technical support for.

In addition to replacing the energy-saving super computer, the garrison will also be using IMCOM-E's SRM funds to repair district heating lines in Camp Nainhof and replace the centralized heating plant in Bldg. 980.

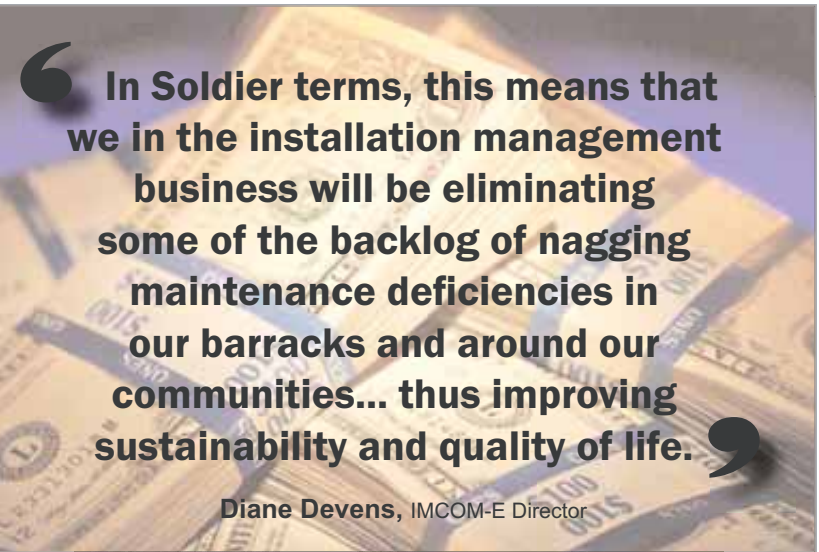
Although they are not flashy projects like a new gym or coffee bar, the heating projects will mean environmental improvements and more reliable services for Soldiers.

Koller said one-third of the heating lines in Camp Nainhof, an area which includes the garrison dining facility and unaccompanied housing, have reached their 30-year life expectancy and are beginning to fail.

In fact, due to faulty lines, the dining facility lost heat twice last year, an unacceptable scenario for a facility that feeds hundreds of Soldiers and civilians every day.

Replacing the lines will ensure reliable heating to those buildings, with no interruptions to the customer during repair, said Koller.

The half-million dollars spent to replace the centralized heating plant



in Bldg. 980, which provides heat to a complex of buildings occupied by Civilians on the Battlefield, will result in a more environmentally friendly garrison.

DPW will replace the current oil-fired facility with a wood-fired one operated by trees cut from Hohenfels' own training area, thus saving the garrison the cost of purchasing energy from an outside supplier.

Though cutting and burning wood may not seem environmentally friendly, it in fact will reduce the garrison's green gas emissions by 53 tons annually.

The trees must be cut anyway to

make room for new growth, and when burned the trees emit the same amount of carbon dioxide they had consumed during the growth stage, making it a carbon-neutral energy source.

Koller said the new heating plant will pay for itself in little more than three-and-a-half years.

Receiving SRM funds to spend on critical capital improvement, will allow the garrison to continue other quality of life improvement initiatives such as renovating the Community Activities Center and consolidating services (such as the Post Exchange, Pxtra, Clothing and Sales, Sixt Car Rental and more) along Main Street Hohenfels.

Craig Ferguson turns Hohenfels Zone into comedy club

by **KRISTIN BRADLEY**

Bavarian News

Comedians Craig Ferguson and Matt Baetz transformed the Zone into a packed comedy club July 1 when they came to entertain the Soldiers, family and community members of U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels as part of their United Service Organizations tour.

More than 200 people from Hohenfels, Grafenwoehr, Vilseck, Kaiserslautern and Schweinfurt filled the Zone after lining up as early as an hour and a half before show time.

Inside, they found the room steeped in club atmosphere with small candles on the tables and servers circulating throughout the floor taking drink orders from the audience.

Backstage, Ferguson and Baetz spent their last few moments before show time not relaxing but signing the large stack of glossy photos they would hand out after the performance.

As he continued a steady rhythm of signatures, Ferguson explained why he and his protégé temporarily left busy careers in California for an overseas USO tour.

"We both firmly believe the American military does us the huge favor of taking the fight to the enemy instead of letting them bring the fight to



We both firmly believe the American military does us the huge favor of taking the fight to the enemy instead of letting them bring the fight to us.

Craig Ferguson, Comedian

us," Ferguson said. "If we take a little time out of our vacation it's really no big whoop. It's an honor to be part of the USO; it's a way for civilian entertainers to show our gratitude."

Baetz also expressed a humble desire to do his part to say "thank you" to service members.

"I just hope we can provide them with a little bit of escape, an evening out away from stress and work," said Baetz.

"We're not rocket scientists, we're not changing the world here. We're just a couple of gags trying to give them a good time," Ferguson added.

Whether talking backstage about their motivation for joining the tour, or joking onstage about their inferiority as comedians compared to Soldiers, both Ferguson and Baetz seemed to

exude a genuine desire to give something back to American troops that went beyond rehearsed talking points.

Before coming to Hohenfels, the duo made stops in Kosovo. Ferguson recalled how seeing bare-footed children playing atop rubble in a country destroyed by war reminded him of his own father who grew up poor in a Scottish town heavily bombed during World War II.

"It made me think of my father who didn't own a pair of shoes until he was 11," Ferguson said. "Kosovo is trying to get back on its feet and the military is there making it happen."

That synthesis of Scottish and American pride is something Ferguson brought with him onstage. He frequently joked about his experiences when he first came to America and his desire to become

an American citizen.

Baetz insightfully picked up on Soldier idiosyncrasies during previous visits to Iraq and Afghanistan, working them into his routine.

He joked about Soldiers spending hours in firefights who relax by playing "Call of Duty" and shared his disbelief when, during a routine at a remote Forward Operating Base in Afghanistan, Soldiers apologized for having to leave during the show to return fire to a group of attacking Taliban. "You're sorry?" he joked. "Really? What am I gonna do, get mad?"

All joking aside, Baetz told the audience, "These are the greatest shows I will ever do in my life."

After the show, the gratified audience lined up for the chance at a photo with the performers.

"It was hilarious. I like his (Ferguson's) show and his stand-up was even funnier. It was really nice to see someone like that here," said Spc. Robert Pegeron, adding he would like to see more big-name acts come to Hohenfels.

"It was amazing. This is one of the best parts of being in the Army when someone I watch on TV comes here" said Spc. Clinton Moore. "(Celebrities) are made famous by the people who watch them—it's nice when they give back to the Soldiers who watch them."

Hohenfels student takes top honors on Scholastic Challenge exam

Story and photo by
KRISTIN BRADLEY
Bavarian News

Mary Kate Adgie, an eighth-grader at Hohenfels Middle/High School during the 2008/2009 term, was named the Scholastic Challenge 2009 U.S. Military School Champion after scoring the highest of all military school students who took the Scholastic Challenge exam.

Winners are named for each state and in the categories of U.S. territory schools and U.S. military schools.

The challenge, a 100-question exam students have 60 minutes to complete, was designed by middle school teachers and has been administered nationally since 2002.

The test is designed for eighth-grade students and covers a wide range of subjects including math, science, history, geography, language and even pop culture.



Mary Kate Adgie, who just finished eighth grade at Hohenfels Middle/High School, had the highest score of all students at military schools who took the Scholastic Challenge 2009 exam.

Adgie, who said she had no idea she had received the award until it was announced during a school assembly, said she tends to get nervous before a test but ends up doing pretty well.

Adgie said she never expected to win an award for the test she didn't spend much time worrying about.

"I thought I did okay. Most questions were ones we had learned throughout the years in school ... I didn't know I would be taking it until the day before. I didn't know much about it, so I didn't freak out about it much," Adgie said.

Amy Keeler, who teaches language arts and gifted education at HMHS, said this was the first year her students participated in the challenge.

"I wanted the kids to have the opportunity to excel and face new challenges," Keeler said, explaining that entering was a sort of experiment and she didn't know what to expect.

Keeler said she was ecstatic when

she found out Adgie had the top score of all military students, hardly able to keep the news a secret until the assembly.

Adgie's father, Lt. Col. Ken Adgie, said he and his wife Paige were also surprised and excited their daughter did so well.

"She is a self-starter, she puts a lot of effort into her homework; she's proud of her work," Adgie said. "We were pleasantly surprised, it is an awesome achievement. Paige and I are exceptionally proud of her."

When asked if she has advice to help other students succeed when taking tests, Adgie said, "Relax. Don't stress too much. And don't spend forever on one problem. If you're wrong you're wrong and you just try to do better on the next question."

After a permanent change of station, Adgie will begin the 2009/2010 school year in Pennsylvania.

Quarles takes command of garrison

Story and photo by
KRISTIN BRADLEY
Bavarian News

Lt. Col. Kevin Quarles took command of U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels from Lt. Col. Gary Bloomberg during a ceremony July 1 at the Festplatz.

Col. Chris Sorenson, USAG Grafenwoehr commander, praised Bloomberg and his wife, Inge, for the time they have devoted to the Hohenfels community over the past two years.

“Their fantastic garrison command has accomplished more in a single two-year tour than any predecessor could in a decade,” Sorenson said.

“His main street vision, which is nearly 90 percent accomplished during his watch, centralizes common support,” he said, referring to Bloomberg’s Main Street Hohenfels initiative which, upon the relocation of the Pxtra, Clothing and Sales, Sixt Car Rental and others to Bldg. 9 will see all major post services located along one stretch of Patton Drive.

Sorenson also lauded Bloomberg for the projects he brought to fruition

during his time in command, citing the post gym, theater and teen center renovations, the acquisition of All Terrain Vehicles in support of a Warrior Adventure Quest program, the acquisition of a new Kids Play Zone and the recently begun remodeling of the Community Activities Center to include a new coffee bar.

Once Bloomberg took the podium, he immediately gave credit for Hohenfels many quality of life improvements over the past two years to a long list of garrison staff.

After naming and thanking many of the garrison’s department leaders, he acknowledged the German workers who make up 60 percent of USAG Hohenfels employees.

“You take the German workers out of Hohenfels and you shut the door and turn out the lights because frankly we couldn’t do it without them,” said Bloomberg.

He also cited the positive and symbiotic relationship between Americans and the surrounding German communities as one of the factors making Hohenfels a great place to live.

After stating his many thanks, Bloomberg assured the crowd that, “I

leave here knowing the garrison is in good hands.”

Quarles assumed command already familiar with the community. He held previous assignments in Hohenfels with the Grizzly Observer/Controller team and with the Combat Maneuver Training Center, predecessor of the Joint Multinational Readiness Center.

Sorenson, like Bloomberg, said he has confidence in Quarles’ ability to command a garrison.

“Like the Bloombergs they (Quarles and his wife Amy) are becoming quick studies in how to run a garrison. Kevin has surveyed the garrison and is now working his vision to continue adapting the garrison to the needs of the community.

“I am highly confident in Kevin’s ability to see the opportunities, muster the resources, and empower the people to continue improving the quality of life for all,” Sorenson said.

Bloomberg’s next assignment is at Eglin Air Force Base, FL., where he will oversee the development of an Army complex to accommodate the 7th Special Forces group when they re-station from Ft. Bragg, N.C., to Eglin AFB.



Col. Chris Sorenson, center, U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr commander, hands the USAG Hohenfels colors from Lt. Col. Gary Bloomberg, left, to Lt. Col. Kevin Quarles during a change of command ceremony at the Festplatz July 1.

527th MP Company returns after 15 months in Afghanistan

Story and photo by
KRISTIN BRADLEY
Bavarian News

One of the last units in the U.S. Army to deploy for 15 long months, the 527th Military Police Company headquartered in Hohenfels with platoons at Hohenfels, Grafenwoehr and Ansbach, finally made it home shortly after midnight on June 28.

According to Capt. Michael Capps, company commander, the unit went into their deployment expecting to spend most of their time mentoring the Afghan National Police.

After their arrival in Afghanistan they found out they would be mentoring the ANP as expected, but that would not be their only task.

“We like to joke that it took our company to do the work of a battalion,” Capps said, because when they departed their company of Soldiers was replaced by the entire 759th MP Battalion.

In addition to training Afghan forces, the company was also put in charge of an expanding Forward Operating Base, oversaw the security and development of a 560 square kilometer area, provided a squad of Soldiers who served as the personal security detachment for the International Security Assistance Force commander, supported maneuver battalions of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team and more.

Despite the many tasks which spread the company across the N2KL region—Nangahar, Nuristan, Kunar and Laghman provinces—Capps said they tried to focus on their original mission of mentoring ANP.

“The payoff was not necessarily in the training they (the ANP) received, it was in the partnership we developed,” Capps said. “When you teach someone something, yes, now they know that skill ... but the partnership we both got out of it was even more valuable.”

Capps said the trust the MPs and the ANP



Soldiers of the 527th Military Police Company in Hohenfels stand in formation at a welcome-home ceremony June 28.

developed training together, eating together and sometimes staying at the same FOB together, made their working relationship more productive.

“If I didn’t have the forces I could absolutely call the police chief and they would come. We had no problem getting dirty with them,” Capps said.

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Glaviano, platoon sergeant of 2nd platoon from Ansbach, said his platoon trained ANP and Afghan Border Police at Torkham Gate, one of the busiest points of entry between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Glaviano said 2nd platoon and the Afghan forces would stay together for weeks at a time,

conducting joint patrols in the area around Torkham Gate looking for people and things smuggled through the passes around the gate.

Glaviano said in general the ANP and ABP were very cooperative and improved their capabilities in the time they were with 2nd platoon.

“At first they were doing their own thing, had no real standards. When we were leaving they were doing things themselves—we didn’t have to tell them to,” said Glaviano.

Capt. Jacob Jordan, platoon leader of 3rd platoon from Grafenwoehr, said they started the ANP’s training with the most basic of tasks.

Jordan said the MPs first made sure the ANP

had their paperwork in order, had the correct equipment and knew how to use it, then worked on police skills such as patrolling, shooting, how to use handcuffs, unarmed self defense, traffic control, how to search buildings, etc.

“We wanted to create a baseline throughout the province. When we got done they all had uniforms and showed up to work on time. When we were done they could do everything we had taught them to do,” said Jordan.

Though he admits that perhaps not all the units they mentored will maintain the skills they learned, Jordan said many units were eager to learn and teach others.

Jordan said it wasn’t always easy to devote as much time as they would have liked to ANP development.

“We had so much more to do than just that and we had to find time to do all of it,” Jordan said, explaining that the platoon would often be called out to help other units in firefights. “Of course it would have been nice to have more people, but everyone is always going to say that. We did our best. I am extremely happy, the platoon did a great job. I had great NCOs who knew what they needed to do.”

Jordan said that as busy as they were, he tried to provide his Soldiers with as much down time as possible.

Glaviano also said relaxation time was critical to getting through the 15-month deployment.

“We would joke around when we had time to relax. When it was time to work we would work, but when we had time we would play volleyball, video games, things like that,” Glaviano said.

Jordan said though the unit knew ahead of time they would be gone for 15 months, which was helpful, it still was difficult, especially around the one year mark.

“After a year you’re like ‘Wow, we still have 90 days,’ Jordan said. “It’s tough, but you do what you have to do.”

Paredes becomes 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment commander

Story and photo by
KRISTIN BRADLEY
Bavarian News

Lt. Col. Rafael Paredes took command of 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment from Lt. Col. John Lange during a ceremony June 2 at Warrior Field.

Col. Charles Preysler, Joint

Col. Charles Preysler, left, Joint Multinational Readiness Center commander, hands the 1-4 colors to Lt. Col. Rafael Paredes during a change of command ceremony July 2 at Warrior Field.



Multinational Readiness Center commander, commended Lange for heading a battalion that endures “365 days of our loved ones in harms way” while also preparing thousands of troops for deployment.

Since 2006 1-4 Inf. has continuously rotated one company at a time to Afghanistan in support of the International Security Assistance

Force, while also fulfilling their role as opposing forces for training units that come to JMRC on the way to their own deployments.

“Without your world-class training they (training units) would not be as well prepared and would inevitably suffer more casualties,” said Preysler.

Lange also acknowledged the hard work of the Soldiers under his command by highlighting for the ceremony guests “a day in the life of 1-4.”

In early March Company B was in Afghanistan preparing to take over for Company C. Companies A and D were in Ft. Bragg, N.C. using their OPFOR skills to train the 82nd Airborne while Headquarters company and a small contingent of other Soldiers sustained the battalion’s operations in Hohenfels, including supporting a mission readiness exercise and coordinating Co. C’s reintegration.

“This is no ordinary battalion, no

ordinary mission and you do more with less than most,” Lange told the Soldiers assembled on the parade field before him.

He credited the company commanders and first sergeants with being the “heart of the battalion,” sometimes being multiple places at once, all without losing sight of the Soldiers and families.

To the entire battalion, Lange said, “It’s my hope you recognize how much you’ve done for so many with so little and take pride in your accomplishments because what we talk about today are your accomplishments.”

To Paredes, Lange said, “Great things lie ahead for this battalion under your command.”

“Few people have this opportunity and we are grateful to be here,” said Paredes, assuring the Soldiers he is dedicated to their wellbeing and that of their families.

Above all, Paredes said he plans to observe the working of the battalion

first, instead of assuming command and immediately making drastic changes.

He then stressed his desire to mentor and build leaders.

“I really truly believe that no matter what unit you’re in, we’re in the business of developing leaders,” Paredes said, adding that his own development was aided by noncommissioned officers who “showed me what right looked like.”

Paredes also said he is not unfamiliar with the capabilities of 1-4 Inf. He served as operations officer and executive officer for the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment when they handed control of their area in Afghanistan to 1-4 Inf. and Romanian forces under Task Force Zabul.

“I know how well they do and can do. I’m proud of them,” said Paredes.

After relinquishing command, Lange will remain in Hohenfels with JMRC’s Timberwolves Observer/Controller team.

What’s Happening

Grafenwoehr/ Vilseck Briefs

Teen deployment education

ASACS counselors will lead a “Coping With Deployment Education Group” at the Netzaberg Teen Center Tuesdays until Aug. 11, from 1-2:15 p.m.
For more, call DSN 472-9215, CIV 09645-917-9215/9224.

Library happenings

The following events are happening at the Vilseck and Grafenwoehr Libraries

- Tomorrow: Gastric Bypass Support Group meets at the Library on Thursday: 5:30 -7 p.m. (Graf)
- Tomorrow: “Girls on the Grill”:
Bring your apron and your favorite cut of meat and we will discuss techniques and recipes for over-the-flame cooking. 1:30 p.m. (Vilseck)
- Tuesday: Kids’ Summer Reading Program: 1:30 p.m. (Graf)
- July 22: Kids’ Summer Reading Program: 9:30 a.m. (Vilseck)
- July 28: As part of our Summer Reading program participants of both libraries will travel to the City of Plauen to tour the lace museum.

For more, please call your USAG Grafenwoehr libraries at DSN 475-1740-Graf or DSN 476-1740-RB or go online: www.library.eur.army.mil.

Parent advisory committee

Join CYSS today from noon to 1 p.m., at the Rose Barracks, CYS Services Bldg. 224. The PAC provides two-way feedback about CYSS and provides input for establishing & changing CYSS procedure. For more, call DSN 476-2760, CIV 09662-83-2760.

Special camp for special kids

A camp for children with special needs is being held through Saturday at the Netzaberg SAS from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
For teens, a camp will be held July 20-24 at the Netzaberg Teen Center from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. or more, call DSN 475-6656 or CIV 09641-83-6656.

DAC training

All new DAC supervisors and employees are required to attend initial classroom EEO and POSH training. Also, new military supervisors of civilian employees are required to attend. This training includes an overview of the EEO

complaints process, the NO FEAR Act, Alternative Dispute Resolution (Mediation), and Reasonable Accommodation
The next EEO and POSH classroom training is July 27 from 9-10 a.m. at the Grafenwoehr EEO Office, Building 537.
Call the EEO office at DSN 475-6390/6609 to register.
If you would like to schedule the EEO and POSH classroom training at your worksite, call DSN 475-8360.

American Legion

If you are interested in joining the American Legion in Grafenwoehr, call CIV 09605-925770, or email georgie.t@t-online.de.

Dinner theatre

Join Grafenwoehr Performing Arts Center for the “Wedding from Hell” Dinner Theater, Friday and Saturday at 6:30 p.m.
Price is \$20 per person and includes buffet dinner and show.

Theatre workshop

Registration for Young Explorer’s Summer Theater Workshop is going on now. Call DSN 475-6426 for more.

FAST classes

The Vilseck Ed. Center will be conducting FAST Classes Monday through July 31. For more, call DSN 476-2753 or DSN 475-6786.

Estate claims

Anyone having any claims on or obligations to the estate of Pvt. 1st Class Michael E. Yates of HHC 3-66AR, 172nd, should contact the summary court martial officer, Capt. Audie Cavazos at DSN 475-6918 or e-mail audie.cavazos@eur.army.mil.

School physicals

School physicals will take place at the Vilseck Health Clinic on the following days:

- August 11 from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Aug. 26 from 8 a.m.-noon.
- Aug. 27 from 1 p.m.-5 p.m.

Schedule your appointments by calling CIV 09662-83-2804.

AL-ANON

AL-ANON meets every Thursday at 7 p.m. at Counseling Center (downstairs), Building 206 (near CDS) in Grafenwoehr.
The only requirement for membership is that there is an alcohol or drug problem with a relative or friend.

For more, call CIV 0171-983-9151.

Summer camp program

Teen Centers in Netzaberg and Rose Barracks are offering a summer camp program from 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
Youth must be registered in CYSS to attend. For more, call DSN 476-3144, CIV 09662-83-3144.

Seventh Day Adventist

The Vilseck Seventh Day Adventist Group meets every Saturday at the Vilseck Chapel, Bldg. 219, from 10:00 a.m.-noon. Fellowship and potluck after worship.

Hohenfels Briefs

Vienna sightseeing

Come see the city of Vienna and its imperial nostalgia with High Baroque churches and aristocratic mansions, monumental projects from the late 19th century.
Bus will depart Hohenfels Saturday from Outdoor Recreation, Bldg. H15, at 4:30 a.m. and return to Hohenfels around 9 p.m. Cost is \$65 per person and includes transportation. Seating is limited to 50 people. For more or to reserve your seat call DSN 466-2060.

Women of the chapel

Protestant Women of the Chapel invite you to join the summer bible studies. Summer dates are July 21, July 28, Aug. 4 and Aug. 18. These stand alone studies will be held at the Hilltop Chapel Center from 10-11:30 a.m.
Childcare for all ages will be available. For more, visit the PWOC website at hohenfelsspwoe.com or contact Crystal Tackaberry at crystal.tackaberry1@us.army.mil.

Hohenfels Youth Center

The Youth Center is offering lower prices on some of the summer trips. For more, call the Hohenfels Youth Center at DSN 466-4492.

July 23-25: Adventures in Garmisch, Cost is to be announced.

July 25: Wet and Wild Day. Cost is free.

July 27: Amberg Pool. Cost is 12 Euro.

July 29: Vienna, Austria. Cost is 50 Euro.

August 4: Geiselwind. Cost is 25 Euro.

August 6: Regensburg Pool. Cost is 10 Euro.

August 8: 3-on-3 Basketball Tourna-

ment. Cost is to be announced.

August 11-13: Venice. Cost is 50 Euro.

August 15: High School all-night party. Cost is \$10.

August 18: Europa Park. Cost is 25 Euro.

August 20: Nuremberg Zoo. Cost is 15 Euro.

August 23-25: Keystone Camping Trip. Cost is \$25.

August 26: Palm Beach. Cost is 15 Euro.

August 27: Shopping at Ramstein and K-Town. Cost is free.

August 29: Back to School BBQ for middle school and high school. Cost is free.

CPR and first aid classes

A CPR and first aid class will be held July 24. CPR certification is valid for one year, and first aid certification is valid for three years.
Cost is \$30 for first aid, \$35 for CPR or \$40 for both, and must be paid to reserve a slot. Each one-day class runs from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Army Community Service conference room. For more, visit the Red Cross office in Bldg. 10 or call DSN 466-1760.

Brewery tour

Take the opportunity to try all different types of beer and the best traditional Bavarian food. Bus will depart Hohenfels July 25 from ODR, Bldg. H15 at 11 a.m. and return around 10 p.m.
Cost is \$40 per person and price includes transportation and brewery tours at each of the stops. Seating is limited to the first 50 people, so call to reserve your seats today.
For more, call DSN 466-2060.

Education Center testing

If you plan on applying for OCS, you will need an ACT score. This test is offered the first Wednesday of every month at 8:30 a.m. and usually takes six to eight weeks to get the results back.
Take a Defense Language Proficiency Test if you speak another language. This test can help you get college credit and will also update on your ERB/ORB and you could get extra pay for your knowledge.
CLEP, DSST, Excelsior exams as well as Army Personnel Tests are also offered. Testing is by appointment only. Numerous appointments are open in July and August.
For more, call DSN 466-4040.

Board elections

KONTAKT Club (Outreach) Hohenfels will be holding Board elections Aug. 8 at Bldg. 743 at 4 p.m. KONTAKT club is a great way to get more involved

in your community, make new friends, learn about German culture, learn or practice your German and enjoy free or discounted activities, events and trips. Submit your name if you are interested in running for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Committee Chair, Youth/Teen Activity Coordinator, or Member at Large.
For more, contact Anna Maynard at CIV 0160-5281872 or e-mail anna.maynard@eur.army.mil or Christina Wilson at DSN 466-4294 or christina.n.wilson@eur.army.mil.

Crocodile Dock VBS

The Hohenfels Chapel Community is looking for adult and teen volunteers to participate in Crocodile Dock, this year’s Vacation Bible School Aug. 10-14.
Training and materials will be provided. If you are interested in volunteering contact Ginger Sain at ginger.sain@eu.dodea.edu or Brynn Fiedlder at DSN 466-1570 or brynn0132@hotmail.com.

Blood drive

The Health Clinic is still taking names for the Aug. 11 blood drive. The Health Clinic encourages applicants to pre-register to donate. By donating one unit of blood, you could save three lives.
For more call DSN 466-4006 or e-mail christopher.black2@amedd.army.mil.

Youth Sports enrollment

Registration is now underway through Aug. 14 for all Youth Sports and Fitness Fall sports.
Offered this fall will be Start Smart soccer and flag football for ages 3-5; soccer for ages 6-15; tackle football for ages 8-14; cross country for ages 8-15; bowling for ages 7-16 and cheerleading for ages 7-10 and 11-14. Cost for enrollment range from \$35 to \$85 depending on the sport. A late fee will apply to enrollments after that date.
Parents may enroll their children at the CLEOS office located in Bldg. 10. For more, call DSN 466-2078.

Babysitter’s training class

The Babysitter’s training class Aug. 15 is for youth ages 11-15 years. Students will learn basic first aid and how to supervise children and infants, choose age-appropriate games and toys, perform basic child-care skills and more.
The class will be held in the SAS bldg. from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Cost is \$35 and slots are reserved when the fee is paid. For more, call DSN 466-1760.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR DODDS BAVARIA DISTRICT SCHOOLS

Visit

<http://www.bav-dso.eu.dodea.edu/index.htm>

for all Bavaria District Schools vacancy announcements.

Positions include:

- Educational Aides
- Office Automation Technician
- Substitute Teachers
- General Clerk and Assistant
- Secretary (Office Automation)
- Library Technician
- Education and Training Technician (Sure Start/Kindergarten/Special Education)
- Transportation Technician (Office Automation)



Contact your local school’s main office for more information!

THE TEAMS IN REGENSBURG

TEAM USA

Baseball's "founding fathers" are the defending champions of 2007.

TEAM VENEZUELA

Venezuela had its "Golden Era" in the 1940s, winning three Gold medals in 1941, 1944 and 1945.

TEAM CHINA

The "Land of the Dragon" last qualified for the World Cup in 2005 finishing in 11th place.

TEAM GERMANY

After qualifying in 1972, 1973 and 2007, this is Germany's fourth World Cup tournament. In 2007 Germany came in 13th, celebrating its first World Cup win ever by defeating Thailand 2-0.

SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH	THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10TH
07:00 pm Germany vs. China	07:00 pm USA vs. Venezuela
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11TH	SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH
02:00 pm Venezuela vs. China	02:00 pm China vs. USA
07:00 pm USA vs. Germany	07:00 pm Germany vs. Venezuela

BASEBALL WORLD CUP 2009 REGENSBURG BAVARIA, GERMANY SEPTEMBER 9TH TO 12TH 2009 ARMIN-WOLF-BASEBALL-ARENA

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What’s Happening

Ansbach Briefs

‘Faces of Freedom’

The Thursday 7:50 p.m. AFN Prime Atlantic “Faces of Freedom” program features the 3-159th Aviation Regiment out of Storck Barracks. These Soldiers are deployed to Balad and Basrah, Iraq, but AFN will bring them into your living rooms. “Faces of Freedom” is an AFN special that highlights units and personalizes servicemembers.

Employment seminar

Katterbach Army Community Service hosts an Employment and Education Enrichment Seminar Thursday from 9 a.m.- 2:30 p.m. Representatives from the appropriated and non-appropriated fund personnel sections, along with the education center will brief on services and procedures available. Representatives from ACS’ volunteer program and the Ansbach Spouses and Civilians Club will also be on hand. For more, call DSN 467-2883, CIV 09802-83-2883.

Clinic offers physicals

The Illesheim Health Clinic offers CYS and DoDDS health assessments and sports physicals Mondays-Thursdays now through Aug. 31. Spots are limited so call and arrange for an appointment as soon as possible. Walk-ins are not accepted. For more, call DSN 467-4512, CIV 09841-83-4512.

Estate claims

Anyone having claims on or obligations to the estate of Sgt. Richard A. Dempster, F Co., 5-158th Aviation Battalion, should contact the summary court officer, 1st Lt. Andrew Wempe at DSN 467-2200, CIV 09802-83-2200.

Knobby Jam

Ansbach Outdoor Recreation hosts the 2009 Mountain Bike Race - Knobby Jam - July 18 at Soldiers Lake. Schedule: registration from 8-9:30 a.m., course pre-ride from 9-9:30 a.m., men’s race from 10 a.m. to noon, women’s and youth senior race from 12:30-2 p.m., and youth ages 6 and older race from 2:30-3:30 p.m. An awards ceremony will take place after the races. For more, call DSN 467-3225, CIV 09802-83-3225.

Get medieval

Ansbach Outdoor Recreation offers a

trip the Kaltenberg Medieval Fest July 19. Transportation to the event is \$29 for adults and \$19 for children. For more, call DSN 467-3225, CIV 09802-83-3225.

Travel tips - Dinkelsbuhl

Ansbach Army Community Service continues its Brown Bag Seminar travel tip series with July’s focus being on Dinkelsbuhl. The seminars take place July 16 from noon to 1 p.m. at the Katterbach ACS and July 22 from noon to 1 p.m. at the Storck ACS. The series culminates with a walking tour of Dinkelsbuhl July 30. For more, call DSN 467-2883, CIV 09802-83-2883.

Summer reading program

Ansbach’s community libraries offer their summer reading program now through July 30 for youth of all ages. During the program, people log the books they read and enjoy special events including crafts, games, story and book readings and other surprises. For more, call the Bleidorn Library at DSN 468-1740, CIV 0981-183-1740, or the Storck Library at DSN 467-4675, CIV 09841-83-4675.

Sunset paddling

Ansbach Outdoor Recreation offers the Sunset Paddling Program Wednesday evenings through Aug. 5. The program features after-work sunset paddles on the Altmuhl River. The trip goes from the mouth of the Altmuhl-see to Ornbau and takes about an hour and a half.

After the trip, the group stops for dinner at an imbiss on the bank of the river. No experience is necessary to take part in the trip.

Cost is \$25 for adults, \$15 for children and \$59 for families. For more, call DSN 467-3225, CIV 09802-83-3225.

Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible takes place Aug. 3-7 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Katterbach Chapel and Aug. 10-14 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Storck Barracks Chapel. This year’s theme is “Crocodile Dock.” With Operation Kid-to-Kids, children experience a sense of purpose and lots of love as they make a pair of soft and snugly Comfort Critters! These cute turtles say “God Cares,” and include a pocket to store a friendly note. These critters are given to disaster relief organizations who in turn pass them along to kids in crisis.

Medical appointments online
Katterbach Health Clinic patients

can make appointments online at www.tricareonline.com by registering and following the instructions.

Girls Scouts-Ansbach

Girls if you like to camp, travel, learn new activities while you meet new friends and performing community service-the Girl Scouts is where you belong! Come on and join the fun and let your adventure begin. For more, contact gsansbach@yahoo.com or call Leslie Atkins at CIV 0176-76-777-695.

Volunteer opportunities

Girl Scouts-Ansbach is looking for adult volunteers. Positions available include treasurer, registrar, leaders and co-leaders. For questions and other info contact gsansbach@yahoo.com or call Leslie Atkins at CIV 0176-76-777-695.

Schweinfurt Briefs

Volunteers needed at chapel

The Ledward Chapel is looking for volunteers to fill the following volunteer positions: musician for the general Protestant service, gospel service, or Catholic service; vacation Bible school director for summer 2010; Protestant religious education coordinator or Catholic religious education coordinator; Catholic parish coordinator. If interested in volunteering, call CIV 09721-96-1370.

Lunch n’ Learn

Spend lunch at the library Tuesday and learn about the best European travel sites. Beginning at 12:15 p.m., participants are encouraged to bring their own lunch to enjoy as they gain knowledge about vacation hotspots for the summer. To sign up, call the library at DSN 354-1740, CIV 09721-96-1740.

Free lunch for teens

The Ledward Chapel now offers free lunch for teens Tuesdays from noon to 1 p.m. until July 28. For more details, call 09721-96-1370.

Invest for future

Army Community Service offers a workshop on how to invest for future wealth July 21 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. The training provides basic information on investing and is designed to inspire confidence in handling finances. To register, call DSN 354-6933, CIV 09721-96-6933.

POC training

Interested in becoming a point of contact for your family readiness group? Come to the POC training at Army Community Service July 22 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. To register, call CIV 09721-96-6933 or DSN 354-6933.

Winefest in Stammheim

Join Outdoor Recreation for a trip to the winefest in Stammheim July 26. Cost is \$10 for transportation. Bus departs at 1 p.m. and returns at 5 p.m. For more information or to sign up, call ODR at DSN 353-8080, CIV 09721-96-8080.

Federal resume class

Learn about the Army’s civilian personnel online Web site and understand how to upload and view your resume for possible federal employment. Class is held Friday in bldg. 206 from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. To sign up, call DSN 354-6933, CIV 09721-96-6933.

G.U.T.S

Are you the new kid in town? Army Community Service offers an orientation program for those youth who are new to the community. Held July 22 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Giving Understand to Teens in Schweinfurt, or GUTS, is a newcomers program providing information on how to enjoy and navigate the community. For details or to sign up, call DSN 354-6933, CIV 09721-96-6933.

The Edge

Get the summer edge and join Child, Youth and School Services as they offer

classes as part of ‘The Edge’ program. • Now until July 28: Theater 101 for grades 6-12 • Now until July 30: Summer Fit for grades 6-12 • Now until July 31: Pimp this Ride for grades 9-12. All classes are free and run 3 to 6 p.m. To sign up, call central registration at CIV 09721-96-6517 or DSN 354-6517.

Destination Schweinfurt

Join Army Community Service as they take a trip Monday to Volkach to tour the town. Transportation is available; however, carpooling is also an option. Bus departs from ACS at 9 a.m. and returns at 2 p.m. To register, call DSN 354-6933, CIV 09721-96-6933.

Treasurer training

Army Community Services offers training July 28 in the Yellow Ribbon Room for those interested in holding a treasurer position within their family readiness group. Class runs 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Participants will learn the basics of account balancing, fundraising paperwork, and financial reports. To register, call DSN 354-6933, CIV 09721-96-6933.

Bulk trash

Bulk trash is scheduled to be picked up from Askren Manor, Yorktown Village, and government-leased housing Tuesday. Put bulk items out prior to 7 a.m. on day of pick-up but no earlier than the day before. Bulk trash is only those items too large to transport in your vehicle. For more, call the SORT coordinator at CIV 0162-270-9403.

Summer reading program

The Ledward Library hosts summer reading events July 22 at 8 a.m. for children ages six to 11 and 4 to 5:30 p.m. for teens. The theme will be “Now You See it!” for the children and “Express Yourself” for the teens. For more, call DSN 354-1740, CIV 09721-96-1740.

Strengthen family bonds

Come to a training on how to strengthen family bonds through creative play July 22 in the Yellow Ribbon Room from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Open to the community, the class offers lessons about how playing with children fosters childhood development and reduces stress for parents. To register, call DSN 354-6933, CIV 09721-96-6933.

Flag football officials clinic
Installation Management Command-Europe offers a flag football officials clinic July 22-25 in Schwetzingen. Those interested in attending can contact Finney Fitness Center at CIV 09721-96-8234.

Super Saturday

Childcare is available at the Child Development Center and School Age Services for families with children ages six weeks through fifth-grade July 25 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Registration ends Friday. For more information or to register, call DSN 354-6517.

Teen summer stress buster

The annual teen summer stress buster event is July 30 at Kessler Field from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Come out and enjoy recreational activities, music, free lunch, and more. For details, call DSN 354-6933, CIV 09721-96-6933.

Library book club

The library book club will meet July 30 at 5:15 p.m. to discuss “One Thousand White Women” by Jim Fergus. Coffee, tea and treats will be served. For details or to join the club, call the library at DSN 354-1740, CIV 09721-96-1740.

Paintball thrills

Play paintball with your friends on Saturdays! The Conn Air Field is open for paintball every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bring your own equipment or find out about rental packages. Group discounts are available for more than 15 people. Call Conn Outdoor Rec for more information at CIV 09721-96-8080.

Cosmic bowling

Enjoy an evening of cosmic bowling at the Kessler bowling alley on Fridays and Saturdays from 8 p.m. to midnight. Dim the lights, turn on the disco ball, and listen to the music as you bowl your best game ever.

Wood shop orientation

Want to learn how to make your own picture frame or chess board? Come to the Wood ‘N Frame Shop orientation Saturdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m. The class is required to use the wood shop for any project. Call to sign up at CIV 09721-96-6304.



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Sunset Paddling

with Outdoor Recreation

Every Wednesday Evening
June 17 - August 5
Leaves Katterbach ODR at 1730

Join ODR Wednesdays after work for a sunset paddle on the Altmuhl River. The trip from the mouth of the Altmuhlsee to Ornbau is approximately 1.5 hours. After paddling, we will stop for dinner at an imbiss on the bank of the river. No experience necessary.

Cost: \$25|adults, \$15|children, \$59|families

Information and Registration: 467.3225 or 09802.83 3225

Clockwise from top left: An old stone bridge arches over a canal in a picturesque corner of Prague; The famous Astronomical Clock strikes the hour in the middle of Old Town; The Prague Castle surrounds the medieval St. Vitus Cathedral; A crowd gathers as the changing of the guards ceremony gets underway at the Prague Castle; standing on the Charles Bridge, visitors can see a panorama of historical buildings and the Vltava River; The Dancing House, built in 1996, stands as a modern architecture icon in the middle of an ancient city.

In the background: St. Vitus Cathedral rises up into the sky.



TAKE A TRIP TO THE ENCHANTING HEART OF EUROPE PRAGUE

by JESSICA LIPARI
FMWR Marketing Volunteer

At 4 a.m. in the morning, my husband and I, along with 86 members of Bamberg's military community boarded two buses departing on a day trip to the heart of Europe. After a few cups of coffee and a four hour bus ride, we arrived in Prague, Czech Republic; the sky was overcast but the scenery was plentiful.

The trip to Prague was a day-trip offered through Bamberg's Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation Outdoor Recreation Center. It provided transportation to and from Prague, a guided tour and time to explore.

Prague is not only the capital city, but is the largest city in the Czech Republic with a population of more than 1.2 million. Prague's history dates back to the 9th century when the castle began construction. Since the 1990s, it has become a popular travel destination because of the many historical sites and inexpensive shopping.

The tour began at the Prague Castle with an amazing view of St. Vitus Cathedral. The cathedral is located entirely on the castle grounds. According to the Guinness Book of World Records it is the largest ancient castle in the world and is still used today by the Czech Republic government.

You can easily spend a full day at the castle exploring the multiple churches, visiting museums, walking around the grounds and exploring the multiple courtyards. At the gates of the castle you can take a chance to pose for a picture with the guards. Every hour you can watch the changing of the guards ceremony.

The Prague Castle sits on top of a hill. As you descend down the hill toward the Vltava River, you will see the vineyards growing on the hills. Take the time to stop and enjoy a beverage or snack at one of the cafes inside the castle grounds.

After the descent down, we headed toward the Charles Bridge. Charles Bridge crosses the Vltava River and until 1841 it was the

only bridge crossing the river. This bridge is crowded during the day with tourists and street merchants. It is lined with 30 statues of Saints and protected by three bridge towers.

This picturesque bridge has made its way into popular culture in several music videos and movies, including "Mission: Impossible" and "XXX." Take the time to stop along the bridge and check out the views.

Once across the bridge, we entered into the Old Town and headed straight for the famous Astronomical Clock. The clock is located on the south wall of the Old Town City Hall right next to the square. The clock is medieval and still works.

On the hour, the crowds gather to watch its mechanical parts in motion as it chimes, so timing is important for this stop. If you miss the clock strike on the hour, there are plenty of shops around to visit while waiting for the next hour.

This was the end location of the guided tour and we had several hours to explore Prague on our own. Wander around the cobblestone streets in this area to stop in the many shops.

After a quick lunch break at the new Hard Rock Cafe, we went to find the Dancing House. Take the time to walk along the river to this one-of-a-kind building.

This modern piece of architecture was started in 1992. Completed in 1996, it was designed by Czech architect Vlado Milonic in co-operation with Canadian architect Frank Gehry.

It is said to resemble Fred Astair and Ginger Rogers dancing. The contrast of this modern building with the historical buildings of Prague is unique and for almost 10 years was a controversial site.

As we ventured back from the Dancing House, we wandered around taking in various memorials and sites throughout the downtown core of Prague.

We bought our souvenirs, including a marionette before it was time to leave.

Our time in Prague was short, but we saw some of the major tourist attractions and wet our appetite to come back to explore some

more on our own.

With building architecture ranging from 9th century to modern, Prague is enchanting, and a must-see for either a day-trip from Germany or a quick weekend get-away.

Travel Tips for Prague:

- Prague's major sites can be seen in a day - if you don't mind an early departure and late return.

- Currency is the Czech Crown. The Euro

can be easily converted upon arrival, a lot of places will accept Euro and US Dollars but expect your change to be Czech Crown.

- Wear comfortable walking shoes as there are many

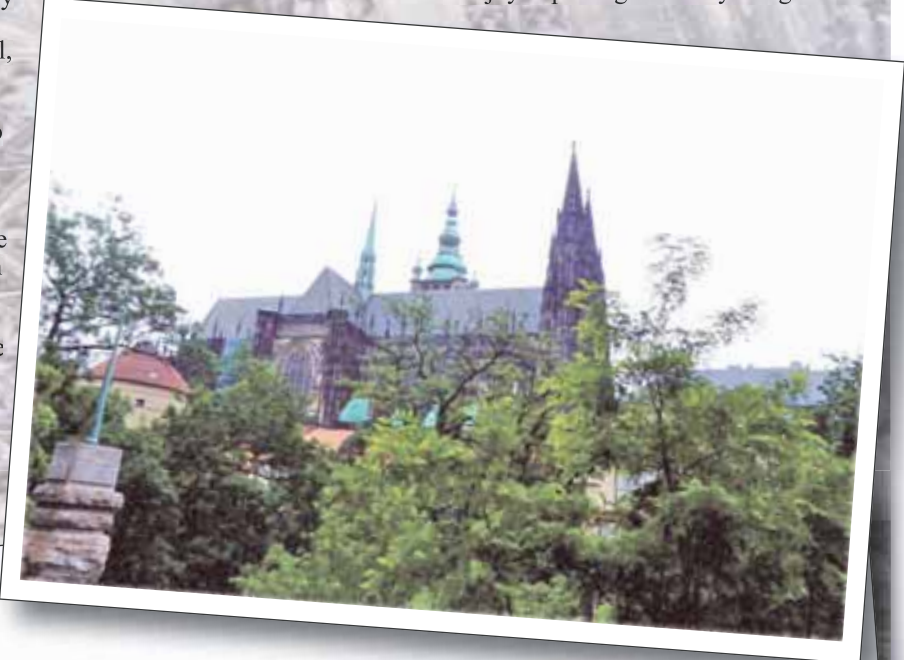
cobblestone streets to walk on.

- For sightseeing, start at the Prague Castle on top of the hill and work your way down. Otherwise, you have to climb uphill after walking all day.

- Bring an umbrella. Prague can be a rainy city.

- Take time to check out the shops in Old Town and get yourself some crystal or a marionette.

- Enjoy exploring the many things to see.



International Special Training Center, NATO celebrate 30 years of training

by Maj. JENNIFER JOHNSON
JMTC PAO

The U.S. military and other contributing North Atlantic Treaty Organization members celebrated the 30-year anniversary of the International Special Training Center, June 25 in Pfullendorf, Germany.

As the only combined, international training center used by NATO, the center reduces training costs for the nine partner nations of Germany, Belgium, Greece, the United States, Norway, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark

and Turkey by sharing the costs of personnel manning, equipment and training resources.

Guest speaker, Maj. Gen. Thomas Csrnko, commander of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, said the ISTC may one day become the NATO Center of Excellence for Special Operations at the tactical level.

The ISTC is a unique example of NATO military training and cooperation. With an ability to blend the tactics, techniques and procedures of not only multiple units, but also multiple countries, the ISTC has created a

common frame of reference among the nine NATO nations' corps of officers and non-commissioned officers, resulting in improved interoperability during missions in Desert Storm, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The ISTC trains NATO Special Operations Forces, and similar type units, in advanced individual patrolling, medical, close quarter battle, sniper, survival, planning and recognition skills.

It was established in 1979 and first called the International Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol School formerly located in Weingarten, Germany.

"It was an unusual school in my day," said Joseph McCready, an ISTC instructor from 1984 to 1987 and former chief warrant officer in the British Royal Air Force. "It was an original idea to combine international Special Forces communication because, by nature, Special Forces Soldiers are very secretive."

The ISTC was the brain-child of a 1974 European and NATO Army Sub-Group Conference, which suggested the centralization of training for long range reconnaissance patrol units and Special Operation Forces in a joint training facility in Europe.

The first memorandum of understanding was signed on August 1, 1980, by Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom establishing the center in Weingarten, Germany, until its subsequent move to Pfullendorf in August 1997.

Now located at the General Oberst von Fritsch Kaserne in Pfullendorf, Germany, the 30th Anniversary celebration was a time for former students and instructors to come together to pay homage.

"It is very unique that you have a brotherhood of Special Forces with a mutual understanding of special operations and small unit tactics," said Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Eyer of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Armored Division, and a former ISTC instructor from 1988-1991. "It has been a tremendous honor to be associated with a small, but unique

organization."

The nine NATO member nations work together to ensure daily operation of the center; originally ten nations strong, the United Kingdom, who played a pivotal role in the center's founding and operations, bowed out in 2001 making the United States the de facto lead nation.

In May 2001, the ILRRPS was christened the ISTC. Under the direction of the Joint Multinational Training Command, the Army's only training command in Europe, the ISTC continues to play an integral role in the U.S. European Command Theater Security Cooperation initiatives, since it trains members of ally nations before deployment on NATO operations.

The instructors at the center are comprised of officers and non-commissioned officers from the nine NATO nations involved in its operation.

"As an instructor and an NCOIC of the ILRRP School, I learned the intricacies of working with the elite soldiers of eight allied nations, which is something I've imparted to Soldiers in the years past and today," said Sgt. Maj. Antonio Reyes, Deputy Commandant of the 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

This year the NCOA graduated more than 2,000 NCOs and of those about 70 were international students.

"We regularly have international students attend the academy and it is imperative that the students learn to work together to accomplish the mission," Reyes said.

"Command here is less about directing and more about influencing and mentoring to get 45 men and women from different nations to work together in spite of differences in culture and military tradition," said Lt. Col. David L. Grosso, out-going commander.

"We train the sons and daughters of nine nations, who after training here, will deploy to Iraq, Afghanistan or Africa. Nothing can be more sacred."



Photo by Eric G. Steen

Lt. Col. David L. Grosso, the outgoing commander of the International Special Training Center, passes the NATO flag to Col. Peter Seidenspinner, the ISTC Commandant, during a change of command ceremony in Pfullendorf, Germany, June 25.

RETIREE CORNER

by DAVE STEWART

Graf Retiree Council president

We were AWOL with the column last month because I was involved in the most exciting work of my public affairs and broadcasting career.

So I'm going to veer a little of the formal retiree column to share some of my thoughts from this event.

I had the honor of being the ceremony narrator and lead for national television commemorating the 65th Anniversary of D-Day at Omaha Beach in Normandy, France.

More than 9,000 visitors, veterans and family members were on hand for this historic event including the presidents of the United States and France, as well as prime ministers from the United Kingdom and Canada and the Prince of Wales.

Surrounding them on stage were 350 veterans of the D-Day landings. One had to marvel at their stamina for sustaining a long trans-Atlantic flight just to be on hand for this special day honoring their heroics.

I left convinced that there will be a 70th Anniversary with still some veterans of D-Day back for one more visit. Some looked very fit for their age.

This is the third presidential event that I have been a part of in Normandy and I never cease to wonder at number of visitors.

In fact between 1 and 1.5 million trek to this serene site annually. I am moved by the classes of French and British school children sent by their teachers to write essays on their visit and thoughts.

I have witnessed visitors of all ages leaving this memorial dabbling at tears after being moved by the young names engraved on the 9,387 Christian Crosses and Stars of David.

Actor Tom Hanks was so stirred by what he saw here during the filming of Saving Private Ryan that he now returns to Normandy frequently and attends all of the commemorations as he did earlier

this month. Below the cemetery lies the 4.5 mile serene beach that will forever mark the brutal battle ground of the "Greatest Generation."

From the beach, looking up at the bluffs and the bunkers that line the key exit routes one grasps the courage and tenacity of our Soldiers and sailors as they jumped from their landing craft and ran into a hail of menacing machine gun fire for several hours before securing the ground above the beach to mark the beginning of the end of the German occupation.

The same ground which now marks the permanent resting place of the thousands who didn't survive D-Day.

There are thousands of U.S. Flags on display from Caen to Cherbourg and along the highways. The citizens here have not forgotten the heroes of D-Day.

Bikers honor veterans of Normandy

On June 7, I walked along the sea wall on Omaha Beach. The tide was in, but receding, waves lapped at the shingles wall that the Soldiers of D-Day used for cover in the first assault.

We were in the 29th Division area. Midway, between the Colleville and Vierville draw is a simple stone monument that marks the area used as the first cemetery for soldiers killed in the landings.

Just a simple marker on what is now private beach front property. As I approached the marker I noted that the Gendarmes were allowing only one way traffic on the adjacent road.

I thought this might be a result of a group of re-enactors, of which there are always plenty each year in June. But the traffic jam was caused by a large group of Harley Davidson clubs that had parked their highly polished bikes next to the monument.

They were from the U.K., Holland and France. There was probably 100 bikers. An American flag was posted high on a staff and was visible above the bikers.

Then a female singer with a wonderful voice started to sing the American national

anthem. Everyone placed their hands over their hearts and at the conclusion, a bugler played "Taps." It was a very moving and astounding event.

DD Form 214 and reporting a death

The most important form you immediately need in the case of death of a retiree is the retiree's last DD Form 214 that was given to you on retirement.

This form contains all of the important information on your career. It provides evidence of retirement, awards, and skills. I would recommend that you locate this form and ensure it's part of your emergency kit in case of death.

I will have more on the emergency kit in an upcoming column, and if you can't locate your DD Form 214, some information on how you can retrieve a true copy.

Retirement Appreciation Day

The next U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr RAD is scheduled for the October 24.



Students and faculty of the Volksschule in Grafenwoehr display the sporting equipment Master Sgt. James P. Federline (retired) donated to the school.

The Garrison has started to plan for this event and in the coming columns we will be providing more details.

This is an extremely important event for those of us who are permanently retired and living in Germany.

Retiree donates toys to school

Master Sgt. (Retired) James Federline was recently thanked for his generous American donation of toys and sporting goods to a local school.

Federline, who also is the Grafenwoehr Garrison Government Relations Officer, presented the bounty to the school in May.

The local newspaper cited Federline as an "out of season Santa Claus". The gifts included gear with which to play soccer and tennis. The school did not have a very large supply of good equipment.

"The children can use these sport articles during their recess and between classes", said Principal, Gerhard Götzl, who thanked Federline in the name of all of the school's children.

Independence Day celebration introduces multi-national crowd to American traditions

by Capt. STEPHEN SHORT
172nd Infantry Brigade

The United States celebrates their independence from the rule of the British Empire on July 4th, the day the Declaration of Independence was signed.

People come together of all backgrounds, faiths and political affiliations to enjoy food, speeches of patriotism and most commonly fireworks displays.

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade celebrated their Independence Day in Diwaniya Province, at Forward Operating Base Echo, Iraq.

The base is home to not only deployed Soldiers from America, serving here for 12 to 15 months, but also contract workers from India, the Middle East and Africa. Many of these people have never seen Americans celebrate their holiday of independence.

The 1st Bn., 2nd Inf. Regt., Black Scarves, held nothing back in showing a little bit of everything that might happen on the 4th of July in America too.

Traditional sporting events like volleyball, soccer and basketball brought numerous teams and spectators out of the air conditioning and on to the field as music played in the background to get the party started.

“Today was awesome and showed the formation that we know how to win,” said 1st Lt. Lonnie Colbert, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn, 2nd Inf. Regt. Public Affairs Officer.

“This is definitely the most interesting July 4th I have had, because I have never seen a tank in a parade before,” added the 25-year-old.

Soldiers ready to have a good time lined up in front of the speakers to demonstrate some line dancing moves to the beat of the music.

Track and field events were held early in the day in an attempt to beat the heat, but in Iraq where low temperatures at night fall no lower than 90’s, it is tough to find a cool spot to play unless you are at the slip and slide hill near the track.

Soldiers built a hill approximately 12 feet high with a splash pool at the bottom and lined the downward sloping path with plastic. Water pumped from a truck filled the splash pool and cascaded down the slide as Soldiers ran and belly flopped at full speed down the field expedient water park attraction that Soldiers sure appreciated as temperatures climbed to near 109 degrees under a cloudless sky.

“Back home we would just grill out and maybe have a few beers, but this water slide is fun as hell,” said Pfc. Timothy Bausum, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn, 2nd Inf. Regt.

The day was not over though as traditions like chili cook offs and parades filled the afternoon hours.

Soldiers and most Americans love a parade and seeing one in Iraq is just as good especially when they are preparing to smash cars and trucks right after it. The good old monster truck car smashing, reminiscent of county fairs, took on a whole new spin as a U.S. Army, M1 Abrams tank smashed over junk cars and trucks to the cheer of spectators.

“This is the first time I have seen a tank crush something and it was pretty bad!,” said Pvt. Jonathan E. Sotomayor, Company C, 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade. “I liked it a lot and it makes me want to stay in and be a tanker even longer,” added Sotomayor.

The 4th of July just wouldn’t be complete without barbecue, so a mobile kitchen was set up outside to cook and serve traditional bar-



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Kim Smith

Soldiers of the 110th Military Police Company pass by in their armored security float at the Fourth of July parade. Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade celebrated their Independence Day at Forward Operating Base Echo in Diwaniya Province, Iraq with fun events and a parade.

beque before the night events such as the talent show, music concert and much anticipated fireworks began.

“This was a lot better than my last 4th of July, I have been here for 14 months and last year we did nothing, so this is a lot better,” said Sgt. Riley Anderson, 23, of the 110th Military Police Company. “I thought the parade was awesome, and I am actually performing in the

concert with part of the praise and worship team tonight,” she added.

The evening wound down after the fireworks, with people gathering to watch an outdoor movie and talk of sporting event achievements and things back home, which is one of the reasons these events were so familiar to the men and women truly participating in our Independence Day in Iraq.

Soldiers assist in documenting, preserving history

by Capt. STEPHEN SHORT
172nd Infantry Brigade

Soldiers of the 172nd Infantry Brigade are enabling documentarians, historians and preservationists to ensure the history of ancient Iraq is preserved and documented for the years to come in Babil Province, Iraq by providing the experts transportation and security as part of their ongoing mission in support of the Babil Provincial Reconstruction Team.

The Babil PRT hosted the World Monuments Fund to conduct site surveys of Babylon, an ancient city near the modern city of Al Hillah in Babil Province, to help determine the possibility of making the Babylon ruins a sustainable historic and tourism site and to develop responsible tourism associated with the ruins.

The World Monuments Fund is a New York based private, non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of historic architecture and cultural heritage sites worldwide through fieldwork, grant making, education and training.

The WMF is launching a project with Iraq to preserve the ancient city of Babylon, where King Nebuchadnezzar II, whose life spanned 630-562 B.C., built his hanging gardens, one of the Seven Wonders of the World.



Photo by Maj. Mike Feeney

A hilltop view of the ancient city of Babylon, where King Nebuchadnezzar II, whose life spanned 630-562 B.C., built his hanging gardens, one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

“We are involving the local populace in the solutions to create a sustainable situation,” said Jeff Allen, the project team leader.

“What you don’t want to do is develop something that outsiders are just going to profit from, but what you want is something where the local populace benefits from it,” added Allen.

“Future tourism will be one of the tools for economic development in Iraq, and we fear that Babylon could

be eaten up by unmanaged development like the paving of roads,” World Monuments President Bonnie Burnham stated at the beginning of the project.

“The city has never been mapped, and there have been very dramatic changes to it.”

Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade make it possible for civilians working with the PRT and U.S. State

Department to go to sites throughout Babil Province and do their work safely.

While the security situation in Iraq has greatly improved over the years, it is still imperative for the U.S. Army to be cautious and work with their Iraqi Army and Police counterparts to ensure convoys operate safely.

“We come out here to the ruins all the time,” said 1st Lt. Bryan Kelso, B Company, platoon leader with the

2-28 Infantry.

“They have a lot going on out here and it is not too much trouble for us to come here, but we like to always have a team with anyone walking the grounds to ensure nothing happens to them and we have accountability,” added Kelso.

Gwendolen Cates, an independent filmmaker, is making a documentary titled “Mourning in the Garden of Eden” illustrating the historical significance of the history of Babylon.

“I am making a documentary of the cultural heritage of Iraq and connecting the past to the present and how that relates to us,” said Cates, a native of New York City, started this project in 2003, when she served as an embedded photojournalist with U.S. Army Military Intelligence in Iraq.

“Iraq has a lot of diversity and many Americans do not know about Babylon and where it is, so bringing tourism back to Iraq is one of the main purposes of this project”” added Cates.

“Iraqi heritage belongs to all humanity,” Samir Sumaida’ie, Iraq’s ambassador to the U.S., said in a statement. “In the immense task of caring for its world heritage, Iraq welcomes help from and collaborations with the international preservation community.”

Twenty Soldiers of the Combat Leaders Course prepare to conduct a Situational Training Exercise to meet the final requirements of the Combat Leaders Course at Forward Operating Base Kalsu, Iraq June 27. The Soldiers mission was to run a convoy to the pretend Forward Operating Base Sage to deliver supplies.



Photo by Pfc. Bethany L. Little



An Iraqi boy sorts tomatoes at the newly opened Central Euphrates Farmers’ Market in North Babil, Iraq June 12. The market, built on Highway 1 connecting Basra with Baghdad and Mosul, is projected to become Iraq’s most significant growth corridor in the years ahead.

Photo by Spc. Darryl L. Montgomery

Funding brings maintenance, repair improvements to Ansbach community

*IMCOM-E and USAG Ansbach
Public Affairs*

Improved barracks, libraries, street lights and roads are just part of how Installation Management Command-Europe officials are applying the significant sum of Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization funds flowing to Europe this year.

According to IMCOM-Europe officials, this is the first year that Europe garrisons have ever received 100 percent of their authorized SRM funding, and U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach stands to benefit greatly from it.

The fiscal year 2009 funding enables the reduction of outstanding work and service orders, more thorough execution of routine preventive maintenance, the initiation of a number of unit-move transformation projects and initiation of projects that improve barracks and repair facilities of deployed Soldiers, along with enhancing energy efficiency, the transportation infrastructure and community facilities.

The funding allows USAG Ansbach to continue with its major construction and renovation process that will create a model for sustainable community design that balances the needs of the mission, the community and the environment, said garrison commander Col. Christopher M. Hickey.

"We are redesigning our community



We're working hard to make Ansbach a home people can be proud of and we have a great plan in place to do just that.

Col. Christopher M. Hickey, USAG Ansbach Commander

to better separate community from tactical and industrial areas," he said. "In Katterbach, this rezoning means moving the community center to Urlas - a former Patriot launching site and training area."

The transformation began last fall at Urlas when construction started on the first 106 of 500 town homes, he added. In the coming years, the colonel said that the transformation will continue with the construction of a new Army and Air Force Exchange Service Post Exchange Shopping Center, commissary, Army lodge, chapel, post office, movie theater, bowling alley, gas station, auto crafts center, outdoor recreation center, and a community center that will house the library, playhouse, arts and crafts, and a family gym.

"Simultaneously on Katterbach, the tactical zone will be greatly improved with the construction of a state-of-the-art gym, a medical and dental clinic, and a new one-plus-one barracks,"

Hickey said. "And last month marked the opening of a superb new BOSS center that was designed by the Soldiers and DPW (director of public works) engineers."

Meanwhile at Storck Barracks - about 40 minutes northwest of Katterbach - construction will begin on a new child development center, a one-plus-one barracks, and major renovations to the post gym and ACS facility, he added.

And throughout the garrison, all the stairwell housing areas and existing barracks have been recently renovated or are in the midst of renovations.

At both Katterbach and Storck, the tactical zones will also see improvement. Airfields, hangars and headquarters will receive or have recently completed major renovations.

IMCOM-Europe and the garrison didn't forget about the environment when planning projects, Hickey added.

"The community is receiving

funding for energy projects that will save the garrison energy costs and help the environment," he said. "These include more energy efficient ways to heat aircraft hangers and the construction of passive energy town homes. We're also looking at how we can incorporate solar energy into the community."

While current construction projects can cause inconvenience and sometimes may seem to be happening with no plan in mind, leadership asks for patience while the big picture begins to take shape.

"The construction that people see today is not done to annoy people or cause inconvenience - it is necessary to do what needs to be done to improve this community," he said. "We're working hard to make Ansbach a home people can be proud of and we have a great plan in place to do just that."

"That said, it takes time - we're not going to get any of this done overnight," he added. "But if people are patient,

keep their areas clean and realize that the Army has made a significant investment in Ansbach, then the hard work and challenges we're going through now will pay off over the next few years."

And that payoff is what IMCOM-Europe is looking for with the funding. This year's funding, coupled with favorable FY08 funding, has the cumulative impact of producing lasting improvements in facilities that up until now have historically suffered from funding challenges.

"In Soldier terms this means that we in the installation management business will be eliminating some of the backlog of nagging maintenance deficiencies in our barracks and around our communities while simultaneously making some wise capital investments to our infrastructure thus improving sustainability and quality of life," said Diane Devens, director of IMCOM-Europe. "Our ability to execute about 300 more projects than originally anticipated at the beginning of the year is simply great news for the soldiers and families stationed in Europe."

Funding strategy and project priority development was a collaborative effort between garrisons and senior mission commanders. While not all requirements could be addressed, the collaborative approach best ensured that the most pressing maintenance needs were appropriately addressed.

BOSS club soars to new heights with 12th CAB

**Story and photo by
Pfc. SONYA McNAIR
12th CAB Public Affairs Office**

Stepping inside the new Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers Club at Katterbach Army Airfield was quite a surprise to many of the Soldiers.

It was not exactly what most were expecting as the neon blue lights danced off the black marble tabletops and dark wood of the DJ station.

The theater room was like stepping into a private Hollywood mansion theater and the multiple widescreens TVs for X-box sessions were like a dream in comparison, not to mention a entire room set aside for table gaming tournaments.

"I think it's pretty cool and way more than I thought," said Pfc. William Germain, an avionics repairer with Bravo Company, 412th Aviation Support Battalion. "I was not expecting to see all the neon lights and the DJ."

There have been initiatives throughout the years in the BOSS program, said Kelly Nebel, director of the community recreational division for FMWR here.

"I think more recently we have had more emphasis on family covenant and at the same time we wanted here, at U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach, to also showcase the importance of our single Soldiers," she said.

Nebel supervises BOSS among many other programs within the division. She added her BOSS coordinator and head of special events, Jenny Sullivan, and BOSS president, Sgt. Daniel P. Bullock, are major assets to the team.

"Jenny has been working very diligently along with Sgt. Bullock and they have done a fantastic job. I could not be more pleased," said Nebel.

"They have made a great team for this effort. I believe we probably got the best BOSS coordinator and BOSS president, as well as the best BOSS facility in the Army."

"This is just stage one. There is another stage in progress for developing the backyard area with more sports activities, including volleyball courts. There might be an outdoor stage and of course we will have a cooking and grilling area," she said.

From the very beginning in terms of development plans, the expansion and improvement proposals for the BOSS facility here at USAG Ansbach has

always been a part of the overall planning for a couple years, said Nebel.

"Overall, as we move forward we are trying to keep a good balance between programs for families and single Soldiers so that everyone has a place to call home," she said.

The original home for the BOSS Club was being renovated as an extension of the PX here at Bismarck Barracks until the emergency exit was covered up and the fire department could not pass the facility due to fire escape regulations, said Sullivan.

"Soldiers were working on renovating the old BOSS facility back in September. They carried truckloads of old equipment out of the building, painted walls, floors and designed the place until it was condemned by the fire department. We then found a location previously known as the Underground in a historical building here."

"In November, I became the new BOSS president. Two days after the fire department came to the initial location where the BOSS center was to be built we ran into a situation where we could not continue because of the fire hazard," said Bullock.

"The USAG Ansbach commander, Col. Christopher M. Hickey and Command Sgt. Maj. James R. Esters showed up on site that day after we got the verdict that we could not continue and we immediately started canvassing the entire post for a new location."

The entire process and concept has had huge support from both the USAG Ansbach and 12th Combat Aviation Brigade command groups, said Nebel.

"They have all been involved from the start and very much an active component of this program," she said.

On the MWR side, Dan Riley, in charge of the entire directorate of FMWR and Laura Waid with business operations, were also key figures in this project, said Nebel.

"The total support of everyone, especially the Soldiers and volunteers, was a community effort," she added.

Special guest at the grand opening was Diane Devens, director of installation management command - Europe.

"She oversees all the garrisons in Europe and anything that is being developed she has an interest," said Nebel. "She is the one who helps us get the financial support to make these things happen by working with the Department of the Army, IMCOM, and FMWRC."



Command Sgt. Maj. H. Lee Kennedy, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, Diane Devens, Installation Management Command-Europe region director, Sgt. Daniel Bullock, BOSS president, Col. Christopher M. Hickey, USAG Ansbach commander, and Col. Robert C. Doerer, 12th CAB commander, cut a ribbon to officially open up the new Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers Center June 25. The new center features integrated sound and video systems, a small theater, a gaming area and more.

"She was very impressed with what she saw here at the new BOSS facility," Nebel said.

There are a variety of different BOSS initiatives going on at different installations, although there is not another BOSS facility that looks like this one, said Nebel.

"This BOSS facility is very state of the art. I'm fairly certain this one is unique. It is situated in a historic building. We are thrilled to have the new BOSS center and thrilled to have Jenny Sullivan and Sgt. Bullock here working with us," she said.

"Without a tight team our program would crumble and without the support of the command I have seen what happens to BOSS programs - they are nonexistent," said Bullock.

"BOSS is looked at very highly on this post. I have never seen a BOSS program in the 11 years I have been in the Army that has as much support as this one. I feel very fortunate to be the president of this organization."

The new BOSS Club will feature events such as football games, holiday parties, salsa nights, bike nights, Texas Hold 'Em Tournaments, X-box tournaments, cookouts and more, said Sullivan.

"The BOSS Soldiers now have a place to call home. They have really taken ownership of it and many Soldiers have been calling to offer assistance in future events. Soldiers can come and relax, play video games, watch movies, or play pool."

"They can also come for events with a club atmosphere that compares with any club downtown. Hopefully this will offer Soldiers a place to hang out, watch American TV and movies, socialize and refrain from drinking and driving," she said.

"We really want to show the rest of the Army what this little community in Ansbach has to offer when it comes to the BOSS program," said Bullock. "We want to set the example and lead the way."

NEED COVERAGE FOR AN EVENT OR HAVE AN IDEA FOR A STORY?

Call the Ansbach Public Affairs Office at DSN 468-1600, CIV 0981-183-791 and tell us about the issues that matter to you.

Summer hire program offers teens professional development, life skills

by **EMILY ATHENS**

Bavarian News

Teens participating in the summer hire program have had the opportunity to not only further their work experience but to gain professional development training as well.

“Part of going into the workforce is getting the opportunity to obtain professional development training. So as part of our goals and objectives with summer hire, we ensure that they get trained in those skills that are important in the workforce,” said Lew Lewis, employment readiness program manager at Army Community Service.

Integrated into the “I can do it” success series for youth, the training touches on topics such as money management, career and interest assessments, computer training, good work ethics, and resume writing.

“One of the first things we offered right up front, before they get their paycheck, was an opportunity to learn how to manage the hard-earned money they’re going to get.

“Then, with the career and interest assessment workshop ... we’re going to give them a chance to assess what their interests are, their values and abilities, and hopefully that will lead them to a career path that will be in tune with what they believe about themselves,” Lewis said.

The summer hire program began June 22, providing administrative, labor, and child care work experience for youth ages 14 to 22. Concluding July 31, the young workers will hopefully walk away with increased skills and an appreciation for the workforce.

“In the long run, it empowers them. They will have an advantage because they will have already learned some skills that they can put to use when they start working,” Lewis said.

According to Lewis, the goal of adding professional development training to the summer hire program is to further their experience, increase their knowledge, and instill work ethic that will stick with the youth when they become employees in the real world.

“There’s less investment, less training and less money that has to be spent on them to have to learn those skills once they get the job. They will come equipped to do the job,” he said.

Melissa Carr, 18, and Markus Cuellar, 19, both high school graduates from Schweinfurt and current summer hires, agree that the experience is priceless.

“It’s been a real learning experience. We’re in an actual working environment. Now, when I go to another job, I will know what to expect,” Cuellar said.

At the conclusion of the program, teens will enjoy a “stress buster” day of fun with their peers in a relaxed environment to reward them for their hard work.

Melissa Carr (left) and Markus Cuellar organize files at Army Community Service as part of their responsibilities during their commitment in the summer hire program.



Photo by Sandra Wilson

CUB SCOUTS

‘Belt-loop Saturday’ keeps boys active

Story and photo by
EMILY ATHENS

Bavarian News

From the early years of being a Cub Scout, young boys strive to don their scout uniform with a heavily laden belt consisting of well-deserved individual belt loops, which reveal their active participation in physical and mental exploration.

To provide the Cub Scouts of Schweinfurt the opportunity to earn additional belt loops, youth of Pack 630 came together for ‘belt loop Saturday’ held on June 20 at Kessler field where Scouts participated in numerous events, including badminton, physical fitness, and maps and compasses.

“The Scout’s idea of belt loops is to give the kids the opportunity to try a whole bunch of different activities in areas of sports, academics and culture,” said Joe Garcia, Cubmaster of Pack 630.

Garcia explained that the events not only provided them a chance to earn belt loops but also to keep the Cub Scouts active and lively during the usually slow summer months.

“There are no standards. We just want them to do their best and have fun with it,” he said.

To kick off the day’s events, scouts presented the colors, recited the Pledge of Allegiance, delivered the Scout promise, and bowed their heads in prayer.

Scouts then dispersed among the three stations where they not only participated in the different activities but were also taught valuable lessons, such as the importance of remaining drug free.

“Being a Cub Scout teaches the children responsibility and gets them to experience other kids their age and how to socially interact,” said Denise Zapien, advanced chairman for the Cub Scouts.



Nicolas Zapien salutes the American Flag while reciting the Pledge of Allegiance prior to the belt loop activities June 20.

Parents were able to participate in the events of Saturday, enjoying grilled food, drinks and good weather, while providing guidance to the many Cub Scouts, who were a part of the Wolves, Bears, or Webelos group within the Pack.

“A lot of what I like about the Scouts is it gives parental guidance to the kids ... it provides activities that the child and parent can

participate in together,” Garcia said.

The Cub Scouts remain proactive in their efforts to better serve the community, having just completed an Askren Manor trash pick-up and providing help during the Memorial Day ceremony.

“What we do is all age specific stuff to do what we can to help out in the community. And of course, the boys love it,” Garcia said.

Teen magazine asks for input

by **SANDRA WILSON**

Bavarian News

Teen writers, artists, photographers and designers are invited to offer their talents for the new teen magazine beginning at Ledward Library. It’s a chance to “Express yourself” - the theme for the teen summer reading program.

“It’s created by the teens for the teens,” said Jason Lawor, library technician. “They can put any content they want in there as long as it’s not R rated. “I’m going to sit there and supervise them and maybe toss some ideas.”

The magazine is intended to highlight the talents in the community, whether it’s through writing, drawing, comics, poetry, jokes, quizzes, or editing and design.

“It’s good for teens to put on college applications,” Lawor said, explaining how it will also be an opportunity for them to explore their interests.

Meetings will be set up weekly after the initial gathering Wednesday at 4 p.m. The first finished product is projected to be finished by October, according to Lawor.

“It all depends on how motivated the kids are,” Lawor said, explaining that the magazine will hopefully be published quarterly, but will remain flexible according to the teens working on it.

According to librarian Christine Willis, the project will incorporate the efforts of several Schweinfurt agencies to include Family Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Marketing and the Child, Youth, and School Services Hired! program.

“This could be part of (the teens’) library job, too,” Willis said about the teens that work in the library as part of the Hired! program.

“If we get the youth motivated and interested in this program, I believe we all will benefit from it,” said Anthony Hickman, coordinator of the Hired! program.

Army Family Action Plan closes CYSS employee-qualification issue

by **MARK HEETER**

Schweinfurt CI Chief

Editor’s note: As a service to provide customer feedback, we will periodically highlight an issue that was raised at the 2009 Army Family Action Plan conference earlier in the year. The AFAP is a year-long process and includes work at resolving issues that members of the community raise.

Each year, in the late winter or early spring, a group of people with a common goal - improving the community, the installation, or the entire Army – come together for the Army Family Action Plan conference.

That would be step two in the AFAP process, said Katy McClelland AFAP manager with U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt Army Community Service.

“AFAP is a year long process,” she said, adding that the first step is the submission of issues, either in person or in writing.

While Soldiers, civilians, family members, employees, and subject-matter experts put their thoughts together to prioritize issues during the conference, a steering group, chaired by the garrison commander, meets quarterly to track progress.

“At this garrison, Lt. Col. (Anthony) Haager likes to track every single issue submitted,” McClelland said. “He likes to be sure that feedback is available to the community.”

Feedback is available at ACS, home of the “issue book,” or online in the Community Info Vault off the USAG Schweinfurt homepage.

For example, the steering group recently closed an issue, submitted by a customer who

questioned child care givers’ qualifications, especially those of local national employees.

“All of our providers have to go through the same training,” said Michael Payne, Child, Youth and School Services coordinator. “And there is oversight in every program.”

As part of the AFAP process, Payne and his staff, as are all issue owners, are required to provide a response to the original submission.

The process gives customers a chance to learn more about services throughout the garrison and the Army, according to Payne.

“I think this is a good piece of information to get out there, so that they understand who they’re leaving their kids with, and what kind of training they’ve gone through that makes them the best-trained and qualified people to take care of their kids,” Payne said.

Seizing the chance to explain his employees’ qualifications, regardless of their status as Americans or local nationals, Payne was quick to note that training is critical for all CYSS employees.

“Each provider is set up on an individual developmental plan, an IDP, and training requirements are mandatory throughout their longevity with us,” he said. “And they are transferable from one program to the next.”

The CYSS issue is one of 55 issues from the last conference that have been resolved and closed.

There are 10 issues still active for the USAG Schweinfurt to work to resolve and four that were forwarded to the Installation Management Command, Europe Region, officials for consideration at their conference.

Spouses endure challenges of cavalry tradition

Story and photo by
EMILY ATHENS
Bavarian News

Decked out in Army combat uniforms, face paint and caps, spouses of the 1st Squadron 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne) came together June 27 to participate in the longstanding tradition of cavalry units within the Army: the Spur Ride.

According to Staff Sgt. Larry Gormley, spurs, in a sense, are a rite of passage in cavalry units, representing a Soldier's strength and dedication to the team.

"Silver spurs are awarded for those who complete the Spur Ride. If you've been in combat with a cav unit, you wear gold," Gormley said, explaining that a Spur Ride is a competition testing cavalry Soldiers' warrior knowledge and abilities.

For the spouses, the events of the day were an opportunity for them to not only show their Soldier what they were capable of accomplishing but a chance to understand the physical and mental demands Soldiers may face to accomplish the mission at hand. According to Lt. Col. Paul Fellinger, battalion commander, the spouses gained appreciation for what the Soldiers are doing, especially now as the unit

prepares to go downrange. "It gives us a chance to do what the guys do on a daily basis— jumping out of airplanes or shooting a gun— it gives us an idea of what they go through ... I actually can visualize now what he's going through," said Gina Feldt, a spouse of Troop B.

Just like their Soldier, spouses underwent a series of six challenges including the assembly and disassembly of a weapon, a grenade toss, rank identification, an obstacle course, a simulated shooting range, and mock doors.

"Mock doors training is the mock-up of a C130. How they did it with the spouses is exactly what they do with Soldiers. That station was the most cav specific," Gormley said, explaining that the mock doors exercise required them to understand the steps involved in an air jump from military aircraft.

As the Soldiers of 1st Sqdn, 91st CAV prepare for an upcoming deployment this fall, the Spur Ride proved to be a morale-building event for all involved, giving wives a taste of the tradition.

"It's great for the ladies because when the guys leave, that's all we have for each other. It gives us good team bonding, and we get to know each other better. When the guys are gone, this is where our team is," Feldt said.



Julia Robinson, with the help of Sgt. First Class Christopher Condra, straps on a parachute prior to the mock jump spouses had to perform during the Spur Ride challenges June 27. Theresa Burns watches in the background.

Engineers prepare to go east

Story and photo by
MARK HEETER
Schweinfurt CI Chief

Twenty-three Soldiers from the 15th Engineer Battalion, including the unit commander, will soon head to Bulgaria to participate in Task Force East, a training, support and humanitarian mission expected to last about four months.

While Lt. Col. David Hurley has been tapped to command the headquarters element in Bulgaria, most of the Soldiers with the 500th and 902nd Engineer Companies will be involved in Humanitarian Construction Assistance (HCA) missions, according to 2nd Lt. Kimberly Jung, who is among those about to deploy.

"They're going to be going around different parts of Bulgaria fixing up schools and hospitals and town halls," Jung said, adding that they will work on projects with Navy Seabees and a directorate of public works.

"This is the first time this unit is doing it," she said, though other units have built the relationships in Task Force East with the militaries of Romania and Bulgaria over the past few years.

"We're going to be down there establishing and maintaining a training center down in Bulgaria," said SSG Steven Tirsell, heavy equipment supervisor with the 500th Engineer Company.

In addition to everything the Schweinfurt-based Soldiers put into the mission, they will also be looking to take away valuable lessons, according to Tirsell.

"A lot of these other countries have deployed to areas that we haven't been to, so we can pick up a little from their lessons learned, and we can share some of our lessons learned," he said. "It's good to see. Everybody does things different, and we can learn a lot from each other." The Soldiers are looking forward to this learning experience, several said.

"It's going to be a cool learning



Pfc. Spencer Symons hammers a nail into a piece of wood supported by Pvt. Will Clawson before the Soldiers head to Bulgaria.

experience to see how they do stuff," said Pvt. Will Clawson, who has been with the 15th EN Bn for about three months and is heading on his first deployment.

"I'm glad to see another country and be working with other forces," agreed Pfc. Spencer Symons, also a relatively new Soldier to the unit and, like Clawson, an electrician by military occupational specialty.

"I don't think anyone knows everything," Symons said.

Especially for the newer Soldiers, according to Jung, the next four months will be a valuable training event, offering them a chance to hone their skills.

"They'll be working with professional plumbers and electricians and carpenters, so they'll be getting first-hand knowledge out of it, but they're going to be helping people at the same time," she said, while joining the other Soldiers to put the finishing touches on their supply containers.

Taking proper measures ensures reimbursement after bicycle theft

by **SANDRA WILSON**
Bavarian News

Bicycle theft is a common reality in this day and age and it is important that owners take the proper measures to protect their property.

In the unfortunate event that a bicycle is stolen or damaged, Soldiers, civilian employees of the Army, Department of Defense personnel, non appropriated fund employees and their family members are eligible to file claims for possible reimbursement.

"Our requirements are that it has to be locked to a fixed object" when outside government quarters or government-assigned individual storage rooms, said Regine Stinson, Schweinfurt claims examiner.

Filing a claim is one thing. Receiving adequate compensation for the loss is another. If bicycles are only locked to themselves, they are considered unsecure and any claims of loss filed may be denied due to negligence.

"If you invite the thieves to take it - that's your problem," Stinson said, explaining that leaving a bicycle unlocked is a prime example of negligence.

It also makes a difference where the bicycle is located when stolen or damaged.

"If your bicycle gets stolen

downtown, it's not an incident to service," Stinson said. "That's on their free time." Conversely, the military installations are considered personnel duty stations and are eligible for claim reports because Soldiers live and work there.

When owners have taken the proper steps to register their bicycles with the provost marshal, the paperwork will remain on file in case it's needed.

Information like the make and model of the bicycle, as well as its accessories, should be documented so that the value can be determined.

"If they cannot prove what they had ... they get the low end" of the monetary compensation, Stinson said.

"The receipt is ... your warranty," she said, adding that the receipt really is the best way to prove the value.

"If it's noted on the inventory as being shipped over here," the inventory sheet can serve as proof of value if it is detailed, said Gerti Mathis, claims examiner, offering possible alternatives.

Regardless of the circumstances, the Schweinfurt claims office is here to assist in the process of filing claims. "We'd be happy to help," Mathis said.

For claims questions or concerns, call DSN 353-8809/8801, CIV 09721-96-8809/8801.



Claims can be filed for damaged or stolen bicycles, but it's important that you are responsible for your property.

Courtesy photo

Claims office does it again, picks up ninth excellence award

by **MARK HEETER**
Schweinfurt CI Chief

New customers come and go, and the claims and concerns they bring are packed with variety.

"It's never been boring. You think you've seen it all," said Regine Stinson, claims examiner with the Schweinfurt legal center.

One constant remains, though.

Stinson and her colleague, Gerti Mathis, are very good at what they do — so good, in fact, that they were recently recognized with their ninth Judge Advocate General's Award for

I think they (the claims examiners) recognize how much of an impact of them putting a little extra work in will have on Soldiers or families who come to them for help.

Capt. Micah Davis, Officer in Charge of Legal Center

claim excellence, bestowed upon the best claims staffs around the Army.

"They're just the consummate professionals. They do whatever needs to be done," said Capt. Micah Davis, trial counsel and the acting officer in charge of the legal center.

"That's our face. That's the face of

this office" Stinson said, when asked to define customer service.

Stinson and Mathis actively pursue opportunities to educate Soldiers about the claims process.

"We have to do a good job up front in order for them to collect in the end," she said, describing the process of

preparing Soldiers and families before moves and deployments, to better position them in the event they need to file claims.

The home-station claims office is responsible for taking care of deployed Soldiers' claims, said Stinson, who has a fresh case involving Soldiers' equipment

that was recently destroyed.

"That's an incident to their service," she said, detailing the intent of the Claims Act. The examiners' compassion for their customers makes them a special pair, Davis said.

"I think what they understand is that the people who come to them don't come to them because things are going well," Davis said. "I think they recognize how much of an impact of them putting a little extra work in will have on Soldiers or families who come to them for help. I think they take all claims seriously and they really just go the extra mile," he said.

Wolfpack places 24th in local 58km relay



The Wolfpack gathers for a pre-race photo May 16. The team includes (left to right); Lt. Col. Mark Read, 1st Lt. Nicholas Kane, Spc. Joseph Mora, Spc. Israel Williams, 1st Lt. Clint Barnett, Spc. Riley Cool, Spc. Dean Carter, Sgt. Keon Rembert, Staff Sgt. Jarod Mendum, Sgt. Sergio Lucio, Sgt 1st Class William Suarez and 1st Lt. Adam Cucchiara.

Story and photo by
Spc. JERRY WILSON
2SCR Public Affairs

A team of Soldiers from 3rd Squadron, 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment recently made a dynamic showing as they finished 24th out of 383 teams to compete in the 25th Annual Amberg-Sulzbach County Run.

The race was a 58 km relay on a course stretching throughout the neighboring towns of Amberg, Sulzbach-Rosenburg and Hirschau; beginning in Witzlich and ending in Hanhnbach.

The team, known as the Wolfpack, finished ahead of most of the competition with a time of three hours, 58 minutes.

Each runner completed a leg of the relay. Each leg was between three and seven kilometers long.

“This event was a great way to interact with local nationals in positive, friendly competition. It was also an impressive success and a way to showcase the physical prowess of our American Soldiers,” said Lt. Col. Mark Read, the team captain. “I was really proud of my guys.”

According to Read, the team was the brainchild of 3rd Squadron Commander Lt. Col. Bryan Denny.

“The Commander heard about the race and asked me to put a team together,” Read said.

“We both saw it as a great way to

interact with our local communities and show our troopers some of the fun, healthy activities available here in Bavaria.”

Read asked for volunteers from the Squadron and the Wolfpack began practicing about two weeks before the event.

The end result was an outstanding accomplishment not only for themselves but the entire squadron.

Lt. Col. Denny was excited about his team’s hard work and determination.

“Our troopers did a fantastic job finishing 24th out of 383 teams,” he said.

“Most of the top performing teams dedicated a lot of time in preparing for the race, and that was time that we just did not have, so to finish 24th is rally a testament of how strong our Dragoons really are.

“Winning is great. Winning for the team is even better,” Denny continued. “These troopers came out on a Saturday and did this for the Wolfpack and that means a lot to me and the Squadron.”

Denny said he is certain this will become an ongoing event for the Wolfpack.

“I think it’s important for Soldiers to get out and get involved in things like this because it strengthens our ties with our host-nation and forms a positive German-American relationship,” he said.

Retired servicemember reels in title of Eschenbach Fischerkoenig

by **ANGELICA MEDINA**
Special to the Bavarian News

Eschenbach Fishing Club has a new “Fischerkoenig,” (King Fisherman) for this year’s Eschenbacher Sportangler fishing tournament in the adult fishermen category, Joe Livingston.

Livingston is retired military and currently a civilian employee at the Combined Arms Training Center in Rose Barracks. He competed against 59 competitors in the adult category, mostly other club members, residents of nearby communities, and Americans from other military installations.

Weigh-in for the tournament was held June 13 at the Tremmersdorf sport field and titles were awarded the following day.

Livingston won by reeling in a pike weighing 6,500 grams, which was larger than the average fish caught during the competition of 5,000 grams, and measuring 98 centimeters in length.

Livingston is a fresh-water fisherman who began fishing from a young age with his father in Georgia at the Savannah River.

He first became involved with the Eschenbach Fishing Club 13 years ago in order to continue his interest in fishing while living in Germany. He says fishing in Germany is much different than fishing in the United States since, “back in the States, you can catch and release a fish. In Germany you can’t do that. If it’s within legal

limit you have to keep it. Here when you first catch a fish, you have to kill it immediately,” he said.

There are also differences in the species of fish found in Germany in comparison to the United States; therefore certain adaptations must be made in fishing techniques.

“In Germany, the majority of the fish don’t have eyes on them. You just put the fishing line through the eye,” Livingston explained.

As the 2009 King Fisherman, Livingston must now make appearances at festivals and at the Fasching parade, toting around his heavy metal necklace that he received when he was awarded his title.

He encourages Americans to get more involved in clubs and various community organizations off-post that interest them.

“Seeing how other cultures fish has improved my fishing ability, of course,” he said when discussing how sharing common interests with other cultures brings about different perspectives and ideas.

He advises those wishing to join the Eschenbach Fishing Club to speak with Martin, owner of the bait and tackle shop in the city of Eschenbach, who organizes the club.

Currently, the club and tournament is celebrating its 50th anniversary, making Livingston’s win special not only as the first American, but also because what it represents in the club’s history.



Photo by Magdalena Wagner

Winners of the Eschenbach Sportangles fishing tournament display their trophies June 14. Retired servicemember Joe Livingston (center) was named King Fisherman, taking the adult category trophy with a pike weighing 6,500 grams.

Hey batter, batter ...



Staff Sgt. Christopher Ibay, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 15th Engineer Battalion, swings at the ball with catcher Travis Spittler, 500th Engineer Company, and umpire Kelvin Stanfield behind him during a softball game.

Unit-level softball is now underway in Schweinfurt with games at Conn field starting at 6 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday. The U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt championships began July 13 to determine the winning unit that will continue onto the Installation Management Command Europe championships in Grafenwoehr Aug. 6-9.

Photo by Sandra Wilson

Army secretary calls balance key to maintaining force, acknowledges challenges of military life

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resignation of Francis Harvey, who left office after revelations of systemic shortfalls in outpatient care at military health care facilities. He took office in his own right four months later, and the Obama administration kept him on when it took office in January.

His tenure has been eventful. In March 2007, the surge in Iraq was continuing, and it featured heavy fighting and casualties. Soldiers sent to the U.S. Central Command region - including those in Afghanistan - served 15-month deployments.

The Army was having problems meeting its recruiting goals. The service had to improve care to wounded warriors, including improving treatment of the signature injuries of the wars - post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injuries. Support to families had to increase.

“On top of this, we needed to take care of the long-term goals for the Army,” Geren said. In short, the Army had to fight today’s wars while positioning the service to maintain its edge in the future.

Balance for Soldiers is key to maintaining the foremost combat force in the world, Geren said. “This is the first time since we’ve had an all-volunteer force that we’ve gone through extended deployments,” the secretary said.

The Army of World War II, Korea and Vietnam were mostly single, male draftees. The Soldiers of today’s force are volunteers and are married, and women serve in large numbers.

The stresses and strains on the all-volunteer force became apparent soon after beginning this conflict, Geren said. Over the past several years, the Army has devoted more and more resources to families.

“Soldiers who are married have expectations for their families, and we’ve been trying to meet those expectations,” he said. “Over the past two years, we’ve doubled the amount of money that goes into family programs - [from] \$700 million to \$1.4 billion.

In his travels around the Army, Geren said, he has heard a lot of concern about the availability and affordability of quality child care. The Army has stepped up construction and manning of child

“For nearly eight years, I have watched Soldiers go off to war and their families stand with them. I always will remember that I had the privilege to work for them when our nation was asking so much of them - truly the privilege of a lifetime.”

Pete Geren, Secretary of the Army

care centers and is working to reduce the cost for enlisted families.

The service is stressed, Geren acknowledged, but he said Soldiers continue to meet the challenges. Many of the Soldiers have served three and four deployments, and some are gone as much as they are home. Increasing dwell time - the time Soldiers are at home stations with families - is a priority.

“The Army is growing, and we hope to meet the 1-to-2 goal [of one year deployed followed by two years at home station] by 2011,” the secretary said.

Part of the problem is demand. Some 130,000 U.S. troops are in Iraq, and almost 60,000 servicemembers are in Afghanistan. The current dwell ratio is a bit over 1-to-1. “This is a work in progress,” Geren said. “We must do more.”

The role of reserve-component Soldiers and the support provided to them increased during Geren’s tenure. “It is clear that the reserves’ role in the war has been crucial,” he said. “We could not do what we have done without the reserves.”

Yet equipping and training Army National Guard and Army Reserve units was far below that of active duty forces. Coordination with Congress has led to a significant increase in equipment funding. National Guard units are receiving the same equipment - often at the same time - as their active duty counterparts.

The last “deuce and a half” - the trucks driven by Army forces since World War II - will be out of the service in fiscal 2011, all replaced by medium tactical trucks. Personal protective equipment, night-vision goggles, communications systems, helicopters and much more are flowing to

reserve-component units.

Funding for Army National Guard equipment was \$1 billion in fiscal year 2001. Today, it is \$3.9 billion yearly.

The reserves are valuable for another reason: their civilian experiences. Army Reserve and National Guardsmen take lessons learned in their civilian jobs to the battlefield, Geren noted. “We have units of Soldiers who are farmers from states in the Midwest,” he said. “They are working with Afghan farmers.”

The units are helping Afghan farmers cope with drought, plant crops other than the poppy that fuels the illicit drug trade and finances terrorist activities, and in keeping livestock alive and producing. Other reservists are lawyers, city managers, firefighters and police, and they work with Afghan and Iraqi counterparts to build governance and economic bases.

“We need to do better in identifying these skills and putting them to work,” Geren said.

But again, he emphasized, families matter.

“We must do a better job getting assistance to the families of our deployed reservists,” he said. Reserve-component servicemembers are not centered at a base, as active duty units are. Updating family programs for reservists is important. Making programs available where they live is a priority that the Army is working on, the secretary said.

Caring for the wounded or the families of those killed in service is a promise the Army and the country must fulfill, Geren said.

Under Geren’s watch, the Army has set up 36 warrior transition units that allow Soldiers to focus on getting better, or - if they are not returning to their units- what they will do with

the rest of their lives. “We have to get rid of administrative rules that make no sense,” he said. “Two years later, I still hear of these.”

Transitioning from the Defense Department health care system to the Department of Veterans Affairs system remains a problem, Geren said. “The Army continues to work with VA to streamline the system, and it’s better than it was, but it needs to be better [than it is now],” he said.

The service has also established Soldier and family assistance centers to centralize services for transition. “If Soldiers want educational opportunities, here’s the place to get them,” he said. “If they need help with housing or getting a job or signing up for VA benefits, it’s all there.”

The Warrior Care and Transition Program is the way the service will take the hard-won lessons and translate them to results. This past year, the Army spent \$751 million on the program, and anticipates spending \$1.2 billion this year. “This is the least we can do, given the tremendous sacrifices these Soldiers and their families have made for us,” Geren said.

The secretary said he appreciates that the American people support their Soldiers, “but I don’t think they understand the scope of their sacrifices,” he said.

“They come up and shake their hands when walking through airports, but they don’t fully understand what it is that these Soldiers do for us every day,” the secretary said. “We need to communicate that better, because just a small percentage of Americans volunteer for military service.”

Geren, a former congressman from Texas, first started working at the Defense Department as a special assistant in 2001. “I was just going to spend two years and go home,” he said. He served as acting secretary of the Air Force before becoming undersecretary of the Army, and ultimately secretary.

“For nearly eight years, I have watched Soldiers go off to war and their families stand with them,” he said. “I always will remember that I had the privilege to work for them when our nation was asking so much of them - truly the privilege of a lifetime.”

EDGE! brings new activities to youth

continued from Page 1
School Age Services and Youth Center activities.

There are numerous activities offered as a part of EDGE!, including scuba diving lessons, Alpine hiking, bowling leagues, mountain biking, kickboxing, and a wide range of other activities. Sessions focus on art, life, fitness and adventure.

EDGE! is a new Army-wide program, made possible through an Army Family Covenant initiative and cooperation between CYSS and several Morale, Welfare and Recreation departments, including Outdoor Recreation, libraries and fitness centers. Additional AFC discounts, however, cannot be applied to EDGE! program costs.

Essentially, EDGE! was conceived as a totally new approach for MWR,” said Brian St. John, an associate at the Center of Expertise for Youth Programs. “It’s a way of helping MWR enhance how many customers they’re serving and find a way to integrate everything, all of the resources, all of the knowledge base and essentially sharing resources,” continued St. John.

Dan Fraizer, MWR Partnership Specialist, is the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr program director. “The

idea behind all of this is to expose the kids to some brand new experiences through our other MWR partners, and then our MWR partners get increased visibility,” said Fraizer.

“The kids go home and tell Mom and Dad how much fun they had, and then the parents are interested in what’s being offered at the library, or the gym.”

CYSS provides most of the equipment necessary to participate, so additional costs are low. Students must have their own hiking boots and water for the EDGE! Garmisch hiking trip, but everything else is provided for them. Children do not need their own scuba gear or wetsuits for the scuba lessons.

Participation fees are structured along the guidelines used by SAS and the Youth Center. For children in grades one through five, the cost is \$5 per hour, and there is no hourly fee for those in grades six through 12. Nominal fees may apply for some special activities. The overnight hiking trip costs \$25 to cover the cost of meals and lodging. This rate includes all preparatory classes and short hikes done in the weeks before the overnight trip.

In August, EDGE! will host a back-to-school party to familiarize children

and teens with the different activities offered and provide more information about scheduling.

Many activities are already planned, but Fraizer welcomes new ideas and suggestions. “I’m interested to hear what people have to say,” said Fraizer. “If they’re looking for a specific program, they want to have pottery or creative writing or performing arts as an EDGE! class, then I definitely want to hear that feedback.”

While many of the activities planned are open to ages 1 to 12, some such as scuba diving and a two-day hike in Garmisch, are only available to children over 12 for safety reasons. Space availability is limited and those wishing to participate should register as soon as possible to ensure a place.

In order to take part in EDGE!, children must be registered with CYSS. Some activities may require a health assessment. EDGE! is not yet available in Hohenfels or Garmisch, but programs currently exist in Grafenwoehr, Vilseck, Schweinfurt, Bamberg and Ansbach.

For more information about specific activities, contact Dan Fraizer at DSN 476-3376, CIV 09662-83-3376 or e-mail daniel.fraizer1@eur.army.mil.

Those wishing to participate can sign up at CYSS Central Registration.

Biden shares Army-family bond with local communities

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Soldiers of the 7th Civil Support Command and visited with Soldiers in the 54th Engineer Battalion and their family members during their reintegration training.

“I’m here as a military mom, an Army military mom,” Biden told family members and Soldiers of the engineer battalion.

The battalion returned from Iraq two days before Biden’s visit and some Soldiers said they had met Biden’s son while they were deployed.

Capt. Beau Biden is a member of the Delaware National Guard who is deployed in Iraq.

“Knowing she has a son in the military lets me know they will give us a higher level of support,” Montevirgen said, who has met the captain while downrange.

Being a member of the military family is something very personal to the second lady, she said.

“I know how hard it is for me, as a mom, to have my son deployed,”

Biden said.

The second lady said sharing this Army family bond can give others comfort in knowing the administration understands difficulties and issues Soldiers and their families face.

Biden spoke with, and listened to, many Soldiers and their family members. If someone had an issue, Biden directed them to people who recorded their dilemma, so it can be examined later in further detail. “It helps military families to know how hard we are working on their behalf,” she said. “We’re working hard so they get the benefits they deserve.”

Biden said the administration is trying to raise awareness about improving educational and health care benefits for veterans, service members and military family members.

On July 4, Biden traveled to Kessler Field in Schweinfurt where she spent Independence Day with the troops and their families. Four Schweinfurt battalions are currently deployed to Iraq.



Photo by Jenny Fritz

Members of the German Army Mountain Music Corps-Garmisch perform at a charity concert co-hosted by the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr July 9 in Grafenwoehr.

Selling a car requires customs clearance

by **ROBERT SZOSTEK**
USAREUR Customs PAO

U.S. personnel can avoid big trouble by getting a customs “Permit to Transfer” when transferring a U.S. Army Europe-plated vehicle to a non-ID card-holder in Germany.

“It is essential to get a permit to transfer before you sell, donate or transfer a car to a German car dealer, junk yard or person who is not an ID card holder,” explained Fred Evans, chief of services at the USAREUR Customs Executive

Agency in Mannheim, Germany.

This applies even if the vehicle was wrecked in an accident and you did not receive any money for it.

If you do not obtain this permit, you will eventually fail to clear vehicle registration when it is time for a Permanent Change of Station, or PCS. Customs authorities also may require you to prove what happened to the vehicle.

“This is obviously very difficult if the car was crushed long ago, you are in the middle of clearing out of Europe and you have no record of where the

car went,” Evans continued.

If you cannot show what happened to the vehicle, you may be identified in a military police report and subject to disciplinary action.

The “Permit to Transfer” (AE Form 550-175B) is available at the U.S. Forces customs office serving your garrison.

More information on selling personal property in Germany the right way is available online at www.hqusareur.army.mil/opm/custom2.htm or by contacting your local U.S. Forces customs office.